

Youth Employment: The key to future political and economic sustainability in a post-conflict country? A case study in Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka.



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Glossary of Abbreviations

GIZ – Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
(German Corporation for International Cooperation)

IDPs – Internally Displaced Peoples

JSAC – Jaffna Social Action Centre

KRQ – Key Research Question

LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

NAITA – National Apprentice & Industrial Training Authority

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

PARCIC – Pacific Asia Resource Centre Inter-People Cooperation

SDC – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

SLA – Sri Lankan Army

SLG – Sri Lankan Government

SOND – Social Organisation Network for Development

STEPS – Skill Through English for Public Servants Institute

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UOHEC – University of Otago Human Ethics Committee

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Abstract

Jaffna District, Sri Lanka, has recently emerged from three decades of violence and isolation, leading to a diverse array of political, social and economic issues. This research project critically analyses the link between youth employment and the economic and political sustainability of this post-conflict region of Sri Lanka. Discontent and disillusionment among youth is regarded as a potential threat to the stability of the country during the post-conflict period, and only through active employment and engagement of Sri Lanka's youth population can the threat of a resurgence in violence be fully eliminated. The goal of this research is to discover to what extent the phenomenon of youth unemployment has become an issue within post-conflict Jaffna District, and how the governmental, non-government, and community actors, are working together to solve this problem. Jaffna District was selected as the research location due to the region's prominence in the Sri Lankan civil war as a stronghold of the separatist LTTE forces, and due to the large influx of refugees and internally displaced peoples (IDPs) following the war's conclusion. These, and other factors, have resulted in Jaffna District's labour market nearing capacity, leading to an inevitable increase in youth unemployment and disaffection. Through both a qualitative and quantitative research process, which included field research in Sri Lanka, this project attempts to increase the awareness and focus on youth employment issues in Jaffna District, and demonstrates the crucial importance of an engaged youth population in post-conflict reconstruction and development.

1. Introduction

Post-conflict Sri Lanka: Setting the scene

1.1 Post-conflict development

During a period of conflict, livelihoods are hugely destabilised by the dysfunctionality of the state, economic decline, and the collapse of public services such as health and education. As a result, the unemployment rate of a conflict-affected region typically increases dramatically, with youth, the social group which is characteristically the most unskilled and most precarious in their employment, typically suffering from a mass loss of employment opportunities (Izzi, 2013). Therefore, conflict, and subsequent issues with unemployment induced-poverty, have a dynamic relationship. Not only does poverty and unemployment often bring about the environment that results in conflict, but the resultant impacts of war greatly amplify the extent of joblessness, and prevent meaningful development occurring. Since the advent of academic fields such as ‘peace and conflict studies’ and ‘post-conflict development research’ toward the end of the Cold War, intense debate has developed as to how the different actors involved in post-conflict processes should operate to provide the most successful and efficient outcomes (Frerks, 2006). However, despite this surge in conflict-related research, relatively few studies exist with reference to the effectiveness of post-conflict development schemes addressing youth unemployment, particularly within a context as recent as that found in northern Sri Lanka (Smith, 2004). This demonstrates the significance of this particular piece of research within the wider related literature.

1.2 Youth unemployment

Unlike the increasing prevalence of research regarding post-conflict issues, specific studies into the effects of youth unemployment on a post-conflict development process are less common, particularly in relation to the Sri Lanka civil war and subsequent peacebuilding effects. It has long been argued that large groups of disaffected youth within a country correspond to a growth in conflict and violence, with theories such as the ‘youth bulge’ being prevalent (Urdal, 2004). While policy makers in the developing world have become increasingly aware that high levels of youth employment in a nation are a clear indicator of a healthy economy and a generally well-off society (Gough, Langevang & Owus, 2013), the lack of research into how to obtain these levels of youth employment when recovering from a period of conflict means that research such as this Masters research project is increasingly significant. Young people in nations such as Sri Lanka traditionally face greater challenges within political

and economic environments, with rates of high un/underemployment, social marginalisation, and potential exclusion from adult status, far greater there than in developed nations. Such problems are exacerbated further when any political instability or conflict occur (Garcia & Farès, 2008). This thesis will demonstrate that youth unemployment is intrinsically linked to the post-conflict development process which is currently being undertaken in the Jaffna District. The demonstration of the need for greater employment opportunities and social involvement for the region's young people will indicate the potential success that the better utilisation of youth could have on strengthening a more sustainable political and economic future within the Jaffna District.

1.3 Jaffna District, Sri Lanka

The South Asian country of Sri Lanka, an island with an estimated population of 22.1 million and an area of 65,610 square kilometres (Sri Lankan Government: Department of Census & Statistics, 2012), was embroiled in a bloody and divisive civil war for almost three decades between 1983 and 2009 (see Fig.1). Since the cessation of violence, the major task within Sri Lanka has been to ensure the continued growth and advancement of this medium development country (as ranked by the United Nation's Human Development Index), and the post-conflict reconstruction of the Northern and Eastern regions of the country, the areas which were most affected by the protracted conflict. This reconstruction process is a multifaceted and complex task, with numerous factors, including significant levels of youth unemployment within the most war-torn areas greatly hindering any meaningful progress. To avoid the brutal cycle of underdevelopment-conflict-underdevelopment, issues such as youth unemployment need to be urgently addressed.

The case study location selected for this research into the significance of youth unemployment on a post-conflict development process is Jaffna District, one of Sri Lanka's 25 administrative districts, and one of five within the Northern Province. Jaffna District has recently emerged from three decades of prolonged violence and isolation, leading to a diverse array of political, social and economic issues. Historically, the capital of Sri Lanka's Tamil population, the significant ethnic majority of Jaffna District remains Tamil, with little over one percent of citizens belonging to Sri Lanka's other ethnic groups. This ethnic distinctiveness, as will be explained in later chapters, also provides a unique characteristic to the post-conflict process. The District was selected as the key research location for this study due to two factors; first, the city's prominence in the Sri Lanka civil war as a stronghold of the LTTE means that it is undergoing a dramatic post-conflict reconstruction and development process, and second, due to the influx of refugees and internally displaced peoples (IDPs), the city's labour market

Figure 1: Jaffna District's position in the world



Source: Adapted from <http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/asia/lk.htm>,
(access date: June 26th, 2015)

is near capacity, leading to the inevitable increase in youth unemployment and associated disaffection. Jaffna District's youth unemployment rate is unknown, but it is expected to be far higher than that of the national rate of 18.6 percent, demonstrating the timely relevance of this research (Sri Lankan Government: Department of Census & Statistics, 2014). Overall, the objective of this research is to discover to what extent youth unemployment is a complicating factor within the post-conflict development process of Jaffna District, and how the governmental, non-governmental, and community actors, are working together to solve this problem. Jaffna District, therefore, provides an interesting setting from which to analyse the linkages between youth unemployment and post conflict development, particularly due to the recent conclusion of the region's conflict, and the ongoing nature of the development process.

1.4 Thesis structure

This research evaluates the extent to which the phenomenon of youth unemployment has become an issue within Jaffna District, and how it relates to the region's post-conflict development process. In order to do this, three research questions were created:

- 1. What is the extent of the 'youth' unemployment issue in post-conflict Jaffna District?***
- 2. How is the issue of 'youth' unemployment in post-conflict Jaffna District being addressed?***
- 3. What are the key factors affecting the future of 'youth' engagement and employment in Jaffna District?***

These questions were utilised throughout the research process as key directives, and have shaped the thesis.

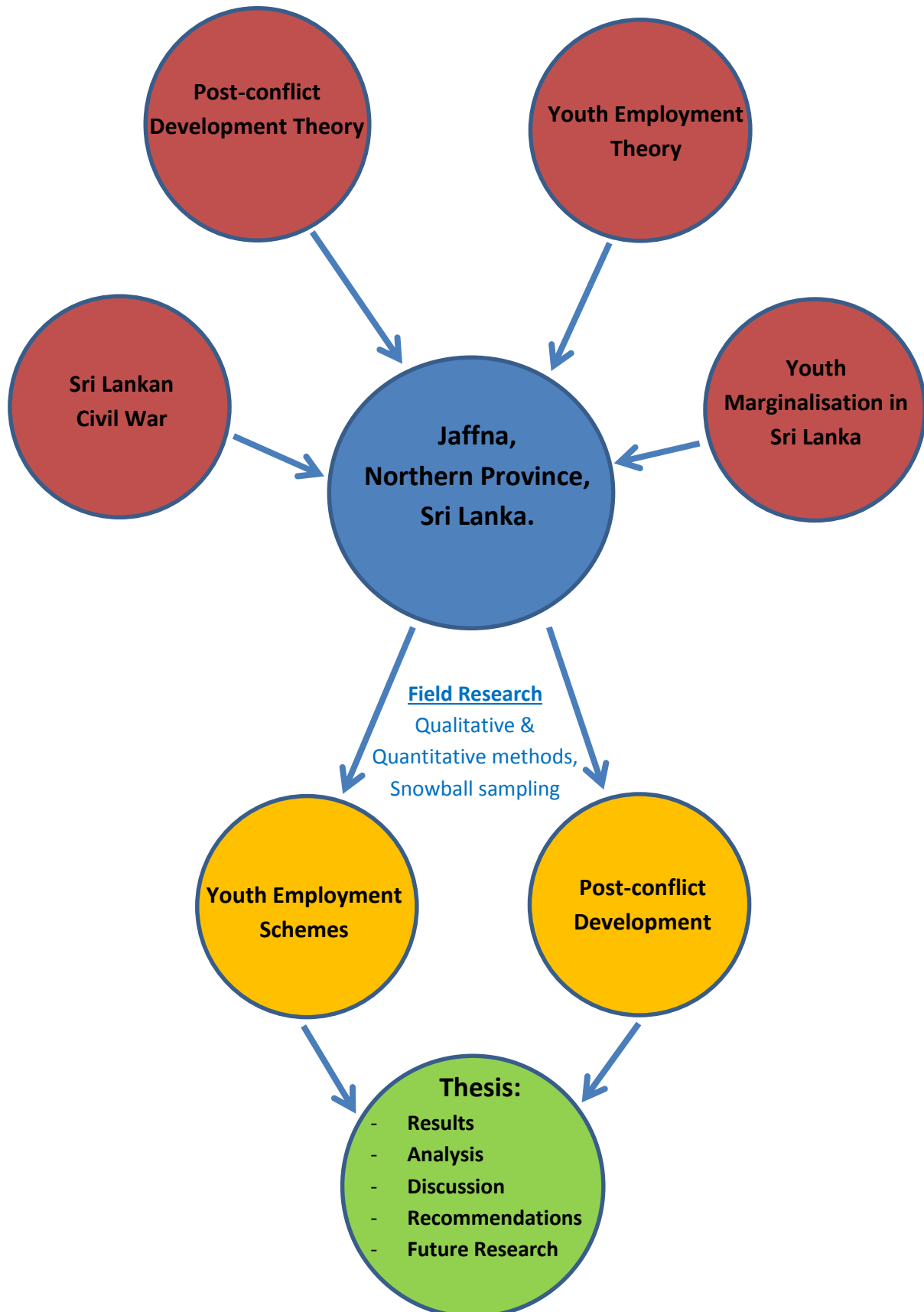
Following this introduction, Chapter Two of the thesis provides the key contextual information required to understand the complexities of Sri Lanka, its Civil War, Jaffna District's significance, and the unique set of circumstances apparent in the post-conflict development process of the region. The information provided in this chapter should allow the reader to appreciate how and why the youth of Jaffna District have an especially difficult challenge in gaining employment, and the historical and contemporary context in which this research occurs. Chapter Three provides a detailed analysis of the current available literature concerning post-conflict development, youth unemployment, and the present situation in northern Sri Lanka. By identifying the 'gaps' within the current post-conflict and youth employment discourses, this literature review provides relevant theory and related examples to describe where this investigation is situated within the wider field of development studies.

Chapter Four explains in detail the methodological framework on which this research was based, outlining the research strategy, the key research questions, the methods utilised, and the ethical nature of this study.

Chapter Five is the first of three discussion chapters, in which the results of the fieldwork, which was undertaken in Jaffna District from February 18th until March 31st 2015, is displayed, interpreted and discussed. This first chapter of results and discussion directly addresses the issues raised in Research Question One, providing primary and secondary data which outline the significance of the youth unemployment within Jaffna District. The post-conflict development process, the structural nature of the region's youth unemployment, and the influence of the Tamil diaspora's remittances, are all discussed in detail. Chapter Six outlines the strategies which are currently in place to combat the issues associated with the vast youth unemployment in Jaffna District, directly responding to the matters raised in Research Question Two. By comparing these programmes with each other, and with similar attempts at youth employment projects in other post-conflict settings, we are able to gain an appreciation of both the success, and also potential areas for improvement in the strategies currently underway in Jaffna District. Chapter Seven concludes the discussion chapters by examining the future prospects for youth employment in Jaffna District. By examining key issues such as the potential devolution of the Northern Province from the national Sri Lankan government, the need for greater investment in industry and infrastructure within the District, and the unique nature of Tamil culture and its effect on youth unemployment, this chapter addresses the future prospects for young people within the region. Finally, Chapter Eight provides concluding remarks with reference to the key research questions of the study, delivers recommendations for potential policy in Jaffna District, and outlines areas in which future research could be conducted. This chapter also acts as a summary for the main issues that are discussed within the three results chapters, and demonstrates where the research was successful in achieving its objectives.

Overall, this thesis delivers a detailed investigation of how youth unemployment has become an issue within post-conflict Jaffna District, how the governmental, non-governmental, and community actors, are working together to solve this problem, and the potential social, political and economic benefits that solving this issue could have on the region's development. Through an examination of post-conflict scenarios, and the issues associated with high youth unemployment in the northern region of Sri Lanka, this project endeavours to increase the awareness of, and focus on, youth employment issues in Jaffna District, while demonstrating the crucial importance of achieving an engaged and inspired youth population in a post-conflict development strategy.

Figure 2: Thesis research structure



2. Context Chapter

Sri Lanka: ‘The Pearl of the Indian Ocean’

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the geographical, political and historical context of Sri Lanka, which is essential to understanding the unique post-conflict circumstances that Jaffna District experiences. The chapter not only discusses the historical and contemporary effects of centuries of colonial rule and the decades long civil war, but it also provides insight into some of the key cultural, societal and demographic aspects that make up modern-day Sri Lanka. In order to comprehend how and why the youth of Jaffna District have an especially difficult challenge in gaining employment, the causes and legacies of the colonial, post-colonial and conflict periods of Sri Lanka’s history must be understood.

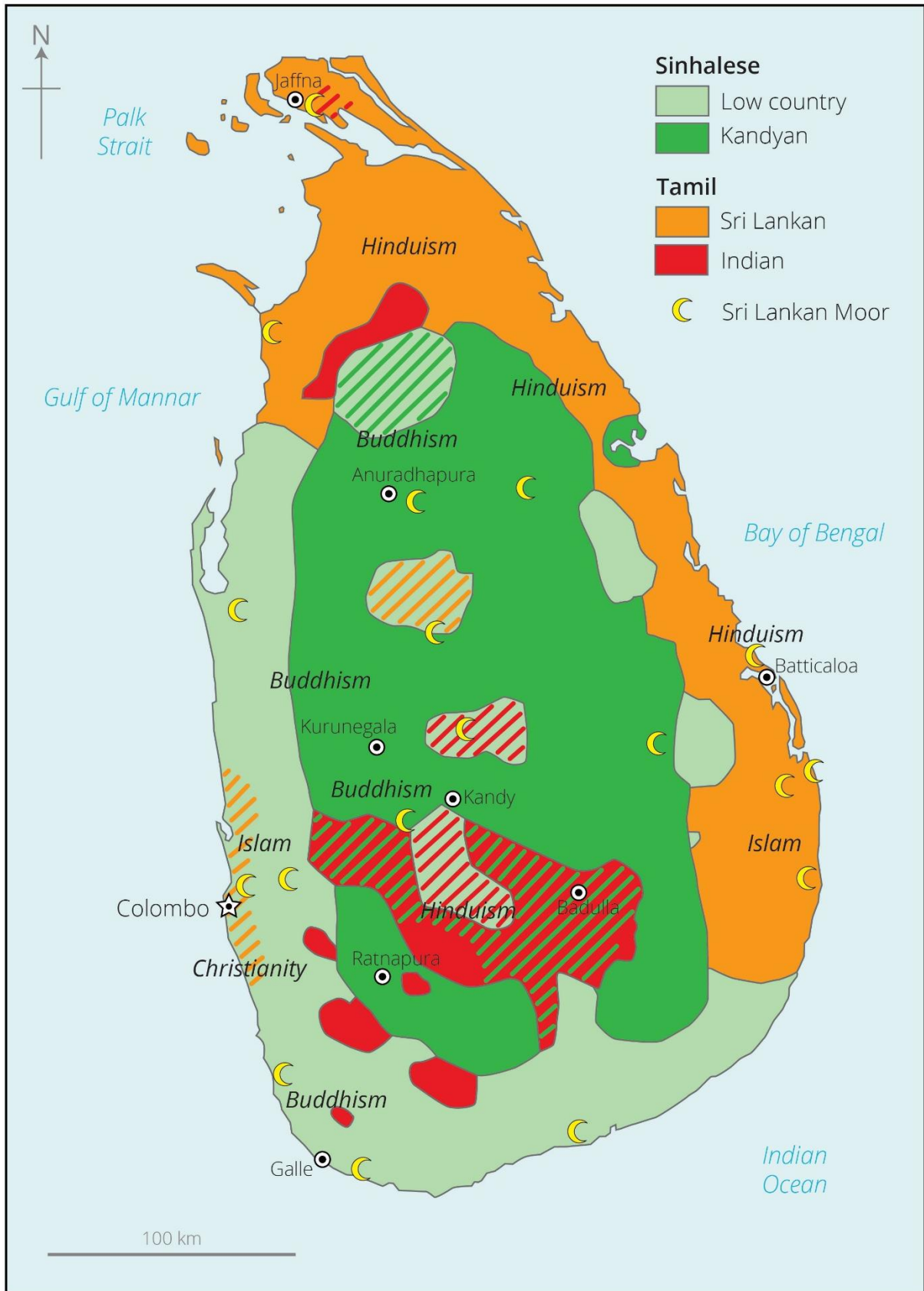
2.2 The geography & demography of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a South Asian island nation of an estimated 21.9 million people which has a continuous record of human settlement for over three millennia (World Bank, 2014). The island covers 65,610 square kilometres of the Indian Ocean, an area slightly smaller than that of the Republic of Ireland, and is located to the south-east of India (World Bank, 2012). Due to distinctive differences in terrain and climate, the country is comprised of three geographical regions; the central highlands, the lowland plains, and the coastal belt. The highlands were historically a region of tropical jungle; however, following the waves of European invasion from the 15th century, large sections of this region were transformed into plantations for the growth of cash crops such as tea (Wijerathna *et al*, 2014). The legacy of this continues to this day. The lowlands provide the majority of the nation’s rolling hills and tropical plains, the traditional use of which is paddy farming (Peiris, 1996), while the coastal belt circumnavigates the entire island and is home to the bulk of the country’s population and urban centres. In terms of governance, Sri Lanka is divided into eight provinces and 25 districts, with one of these districts providing the location of this research, Jaffna District. Colombo is the nation’s most populous and most commercially important city; however Sri Jayewardenepura-Kotte, a historical capital of the 13th-16th century kingdoms, was renamed the legislative capital in 1982. Galle, Kandy, Negombo, Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Jaffna, are also significant cities within their respective provinces and the country as a whole.

Despite its obvious affinities with India, mainly due to geographical intimacy, Sri Lanka has developed a uniquely distinct identity from the Asian mainland over many centuries. Cultural legacies based on early migration from India soon underwent independent alterations in Sri Lanka (Peiris, 1996). Buddhism, which became the dominant religion of the Sri Lankan population, virtually disappeared from India, providing a unique basis for the creation of a societal structure that is solely indigenous to Sri Lanka (Jupp, 1978). Although the island's two major ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and the Tamils, and its two dominant religions, Buddhism and Hinduism, made their way to Sri Lanka from the Indian subcontinent, geographic isolation has provided the opportunity for an independent Sri Lankan culture to emerge through a diverse array of art, architecture, literature and music (Spencer, 2002). Sri Lanka's development has also been heavily influenced by its position as the nexus of important maritime trade routes between Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Centuries prior to the European discovery of the maritime route to India in the 15th Century, Roman, Greek, Chinese and Arab sailors had utilised Sri Lanka as a major shipping destination (Sivasundaram, 2013). However, with the coming of Europeans, Sri Lanka's commercial significance increased dramatically and, as both Sri Lanka and India came under European influence and colonial rule, Western powers began to fight for control of its shores.

Sri Lanka is an incredibly diverse, multi-ethnic and multi-religious country with a current population of 21.9 million (World Bank, 2012). Ethnic, religious and linguistic distinctions within the country are essentially the same. Of the three main ethnic groups (Sinhalese, Tamil, Moors), Sinhalese constitute 74.9% (2012 Census) of the population, accounting for nearly three quarters of Sri Lankan citizens (see Fig.3) (UNDP, 2014). They predominantly inhabit the southern, western and central parts of the country, and comprise 95 percent of the lowland population. Sinhalese are typically Buddhist, with fewer than 10 percent practising Christianity, and around 1 percent engaged in Islam (Harrison, 2012). Tamils represent the second largest ethnic group, around 16 percent of the population (UNDP, 2014), and are separated into two groups; Sri Lankan Tamils, who are long-settled descendants from south-eastern India; and Indian Tamils, which were brought to Sri Lanka as migrant workers during the British colonial period (1818-1947). Tamils inhabit the northern and eastern peripheries of the country, and are predominantly Hindu (Roberts, 2013). The third largest ethnic group are the Sri Lankan Moors, making up around 8 percent of the nation (UNDP, 2014). This group are mainly Muslims and trace their origin back to Arab traders of the 8th century. Smaller ethnic groups such as the Burghers (mixed European descendants), Parsis (west-Indian migrants), and Veddas (aboriginal inhabitants of Sri Lanka) account for the remainder of the population (Wickramasinghe, 2006).

Figure 3: Sri Lankan ethnic and religious demography



Source: Adapted from <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/plc/clp/images/maps/sri.lanka.charts.76.jpg>,
(access date: August 11th, 2015)

2.3 The Colonial Period

The colonial history of Sri Lanka began in 1505 with the arrival of Portuguese explorers. At the time of their arrival, Sri Lanka was divided into three main kingdoms, the Kingdom of Jaffna in the north, the Kingdom of Kandy in the Highlands, and the Kingdom of Kotte on the south-west coast (Spencer, 2002). The Portuguese sought to gain control of the spice and cinnamon trade, which was rapidly growing in importance in Europe and, under the guise of creating trade relationships with the King of Kotte, they were able to gain control of the majority of the island by 1517 (De Silva, 1981). Because of the inaccessible nature of the central highlands, the Kings of Kandy were able to defeat any attempts by the Portuguese to subjugate them, resulting in intermittent conflict throughout the 16th century. In 1592 the inland city of Kandy became the capital of the Sinhalese nation, leading to it becoming a sanctuary for those lowland Sri Lankans who were being religiously persecuted and forcibly converted to Christianity by the Portuguese (Dewaraja, 1988). Sri Lankans became so disenchanted by the Portuguese occupation, that in 1602 the King of Kandy requested assistance from Dutch captain Joris van Spillbergen (Spencer, 2002). This attempt to acquire Dutch support in expelling the Portuguese from Sri Lanka unfortunately only resulted in the substitution of one European colonial ruler for another.

Despite this early contact, it was not until 1638 that the Dutch launched a sustained campaign to remove the Portuguese from Sri Lanka. However, by 1685, 153 years after the Portuguese had arrived in Sri Lanka, the Dutch took control of all the coastal regions previously dominated by the Portuguese. Once again, the Kingdom of Kandy remained out of colonial control, despite repeated attempts by the Dutch to annex the central kingdom (Dewaraja, 1988). Unlike their Portuguese counterparts, the Dutch colonials were less interested in the spreading of religion or expanding territorial gains across the island, but instead their rule was primarily focused on the trade interests of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), a company established in 1602 to facilitate global Dutch trade (De Silva, 1981). As a result, the period of Dutch rule coincided with a phase of significant economic development in Sri Lanka, predominantly based on cash crops such as cinnamon and betel, and luxury products such as gemstones and pearls. The expansion of Sri Lanka as a trade centre saw the development of increasingly extensive infrastructure and transport facilities, including port and canal system developments by the VOC in the east, south and west of the island (De Silva, 1981). The Dutch phase of influence in Sri Lanka ended in 1796, and once again Sri Lanka would experience the supplanting of one European colonial ruler for another.

The British conquest of Sri Lanka was born out of Great Britain's geopolitical interests during the Napoleonic Wars. Britain, concerned that France might use its newly acquired dominance of the Netherlands to gain access of Sri Lanka's resources, invaded the island from their already established colony in India. Not only did the British quickly capture the areas previously held by the Portuguese and Dutch colonials, but they also became the first European power to capture the Kingdom of Kandy in 1815 (Dewaraja, 1988). Following the declaration of Sri Lanka as a Crown Colony under the name of 'Ceylon' in 1818, the country soon became home to vast coffee, cinnamon and coconut plantations, as well as a network of roads and railways. Coffee, initially the dominant crop and backbone of the colonial economy, was usurped by tea and rubber in the 1870s, following a leaf blight that wiped out the majority of the coffee plantations (Duncan, 2002). Unable to persuade many Sinhalese to work on the plantations, the British imported large numbers of Indian labourers from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu to work in the hill country, a decision that drastically changed the social structure of the central region of the island and caused many Sinhalese peasants to lose land to the rapidly expanding tea estates (Duncan, 2002). British rule created, and exacerbated, divisions and enmities within Sri Lanka society by favouring semi-European Burghers, certain high-caste Sinhalese, and the Sri Lankan Tamil communities in the north of the island, over the general Sinhalese population. This social change became increasingly obvious after 1915, and was exemplified by the strengthening of inter-ethnic rivalries (Peebles, 1995). Although explicit clashes between small groups of opposing ethnicities were still rare at this stage, the 1910s marked the beginning of a perpetual rise in the scale and momentum of mutual apathy and distrust between Sinhalese and Tamil citizens. The British-sponsored preferential treatment would ultimately assist in promoting the ethnic division that would cause the post-independence violence within Sri Lanka. English colonial rule also coincided with increasing class divisions, as economic development and the spread of education further solidified the upper castes positions over their uneducated counterparts (Duncan, 2002). Sri Lankan capitalist entrepreneurs also began to emerge under English tutelage, a group which would produce the majority of leaders for the nation's future political and social movements in the coming decades (Peebles, 1995). Despite these negative social results of colonial rule, the British did organise Sri Lanka's first democratic elections, with a partly elected assembly in 1909, and universal suffrage being introduced in 1931. This process was protested against by Sinhalese, Tamil and Burgher elites, who were unhappy at the prospect of lower castes being able to vote (Spencer, 2002). However, this growth in an engaged voting public coincided with increased agitation among the population for greater autonomy for the country. Like many British colonies, whose nationalist movements began between the two World Wars, Sri Lanka's movement toward

independence would grow dramatically during the 1930's, and would ultimately prove to be a far more peaceful and understated process than that of its much larger neighbour, India (Wickramasinghe, 2006).

2.4 Independence

The Sri Lankan independence process was a largely peaceful political movement which was initiated by Ceylonese nationalist leaders in 1944, following Sri Lanka's cooperation with Britain's war efforts during the Second World War. In 1947, the 'Ceylon Independence Act' granted British Ceylon full dominion status, recognising it as an autonomous entity under the British Crown (Spencer, 2002). The creation of a new constitution and elections soon followed, with the United National Party (UNP) becoming the first ruling government, and Don Stephen Senanayake, as the first prime minister. Early post-independence governments were dominated by the colonially-educated, and they promoted ideals of conservative progress, Ceylonese nationalism, democracy, and increasing national economic development through free enterprise (De Silva, 1981). Ceylon remained an active member of the British Commonwealth with the Governor-General, the representative of the British monarch, used as the Head of State. Indeed, the Soviet Union vetoed Ceylon's application for United Nations membership in 1948, as it believed Ceylon was merely a puppet state over which the British exercised complete political control (Peiris, 1996).

The simmering ethnic tensions between Sinhalese and Tamil were to become further obvious following various factors instigating nationwide political and economic discontent in 1955, leading to a new wave of Sinhalese nationalism (Wilson, 1999). Under the leadership of new Prime Minister S.W.R.D Bandaranaike and his Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the government began actively promoting Sinhala culture over other ethnic minorities, including the 'Sinhala Only Bill', which made Sinhalese the nation's only official language and provided direct state support for Buddhist and Sinhalese culture expansion (Tambiah, 1992). This rise in Sinhalese nationalism ushered in a period of great political instability, with violent opposition instigated by the Tamil minority, followed by Bandaranaike's assassination in September 1959 (Roberts, 2009). His widow, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, formed a government the following year, becoming the first female in the world to become prime minister, and she continued her husband's program of Sinhalese nationalism wedded with a form of socialism (De Mel, 2001). Under her rule many business assets were nationalised, and it was not until 1965, when the drive for Sinhalese nationalism began to abate and the country began to experience a prolonged economic recession, that Mrs Bandaranaike was defeated in an election (Jupp, 1978). Following

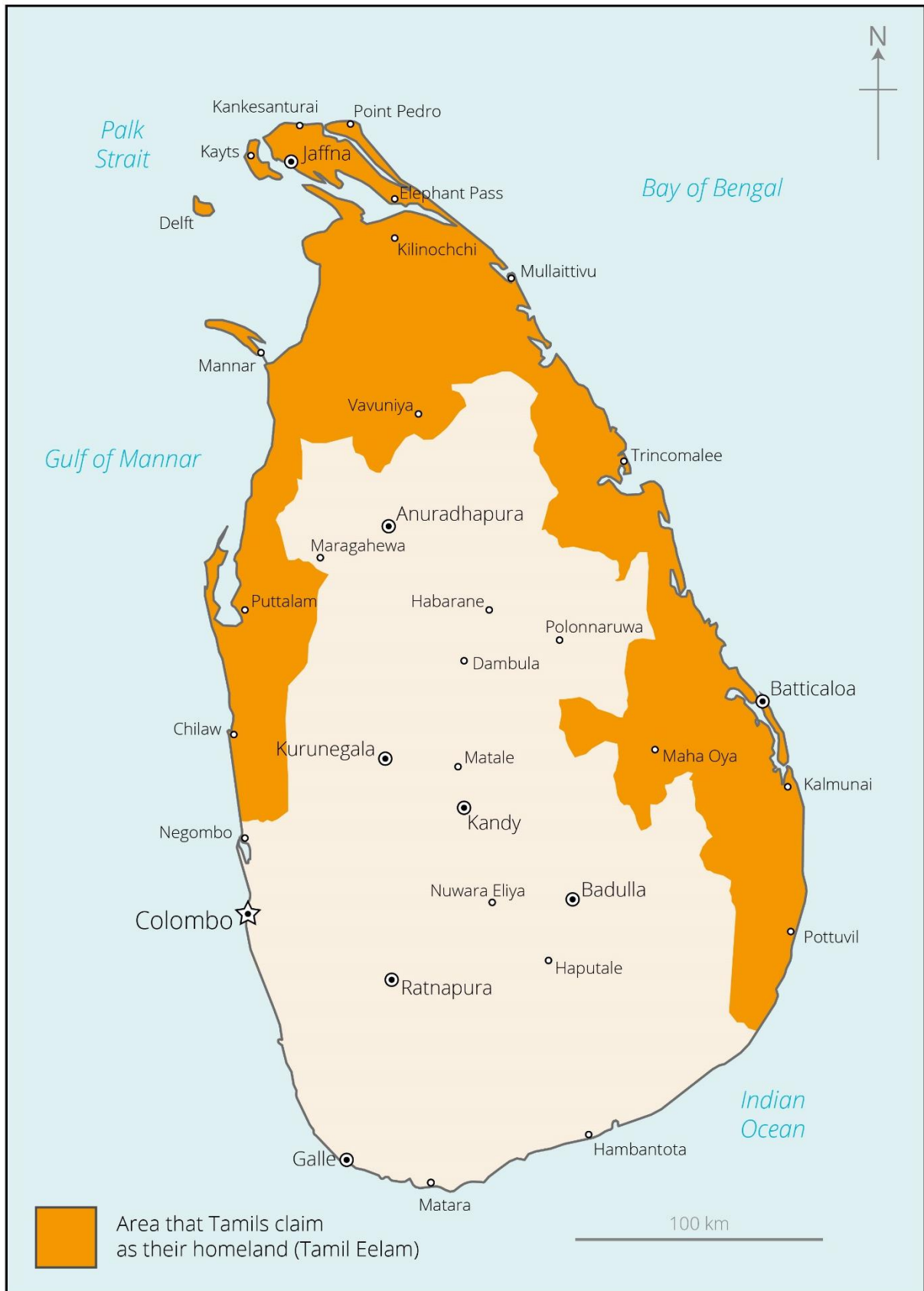
a further five years of market-led economic growth and subsequent inflation and inequality under the UNP, Mrs Bandaranaike's coalition returned to power following the 1970 elections, leading to renewed Sinhalese nationalism and state control of enterprise. Although the socialist policies of Mrs Bandaranaike improved the status of the nation's underprivileged, the country as a whole once again began to stagnate as a result of inflation and government corruption (Del Mel, 2001). Many educated youth, who were becoming increasingly marginalised and disillusioned with national politics, sought radical change through the People's Liberation Front (Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna: JVP), a revolutionary youth organisation which launched an unsuccessful armed rebellion in 1971, claiming 15,000 youth lives (Behera, 2014).

A new constitution in 1972 saw the British Dominion of Ceylon become the fully independent Republic of Sri Lanka, with a president replacing the governor-general as the head of state. Once again Sinhalese nationalism swept the country, with Buddhism being promoted as the state religion, and Sinhalese recognised as the official language (Tambiah, 1992). Despite the acknowledgment of Tamil as a national language in 1978, political, social and cultural unrest escalated in the early 1980s as various groups representing the Tamil minority grew in size and aggression, as their perceived marginalisation by the Sinhalese majority continued (Roberts, 2013). The strongest of these Tamil groups, The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE or Tamil Tigers), began to move towards organised insurgency with the construction of military bases in northern and eastern jungle regions of the island (De Silva, 2000). As the Sri Lankan government began to mobilise the military in order to prevent the growth of this militaristic Tamil movement, direct conflict between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) became increasingly unavoidable.

2.5 The Sri Lankan civil war

The Sri Lankan Civil War was the culmination of decades of growing unrest between the nation's Tamil minority and the Sinhalese majority, leading to 26 years of direct conflict between the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) and the militant Tamil organisation, the LTTE. Founded in May 1976 by enigmatic leader Velupillai Prabhakaran, the LTTE fought to secure an independent homeland in the north and east of Sri Lanka for the Tamil minority named 'Tamil Eelam', the area of historic Tamil domination and settlement (see Fig. 4) (Wilson, 1999). The prelude to full-scale conflict between the LTTE and the SLA was dominated by a series of incendiary events which shattered the centuries of successful coexistence between the majority of Sinhalese and Tamil citizens. The burning of Jaffna library in May 1981 by police and

Figure 4: The proposed independent state of Tamil Eelam



Source: Adapted from <http://exploretheworldmaps.com/tamileelam.html>,
(access date: June 3rd, 2015)

paramilitary forces under instruction from Sinhalese politicians, was seen as a direct attack on Tamil culture, and demonstrated to many Tamils that their government was no longer interested in protecting their cultural heritage (Wilson, 1999). The LTTE's initial method of violence towards the state even included the assassination of a Tamil Member of Parliament in 1977, and subsequent targeting of policemen and other moderate Tamil politicians who were attempting a peaceful discourse with the government (Roberts, 2009). The 'Black July' anti-Tamil pogroms and riots in the south and west of Sri Lanka in 1983 are generally regarded as the beginning of the Civil War, with between 500 and 3000 Tamils murdered in seven days of widespread nationalistic Sinhalese looting and killing. These riots, a response to the deadly ambush of a SLA check point by LTTE forces that killed 13 soldiers, saw the mass exodus of Tamils from southern and western parts of the country to northern regions and other countries, and the instant radicalisation of thousands of Tamil youths who rushed to join militant groups (Uyangoda, 2007). Initially, there was a variety of Tamil separatist groups utilising their own methods for independence, however the LTTE swiftly became the single force against the government after successive displays of ruthlessness in the Kent, Dollar Farm, and Anuradhapura massacres of 1984-85 (Pratap, 2003). A common misnomer surrounding the Sri Lankan Civil War is that the conflict was entirely between two different homogenous ethnicities fighting against one another, but this is incorrect.

"Outsiders like to think it was as simple as the Tigers versus the SLA. It wasn't! Both sides had sympathisers and used various coercion methods... The LTTE were just as brutal to rival Tamil Liberation groups as they were to the Sinhalese." – Key Informant 6, (27th of February, 2015).

Following two years of intermittent battles and massacres, the first peace talks between the two sides were held at Thinphu in 1985. However, following the failure of the warring parties to come to a peace agreement, the fighting continued with greater ferocity, including the first use of a suicide attack by the LTTE in July 1987, a tactic which would become synonymous with the LTTE due to them carrying out more than any other militant group in the world to date (Pratap, 2003). During the late 1980s, India sought to play a peace-making role in the conflict, predominantly due to their desire for regional stability and concerns about the possibility of India's own Tamil provinces potentially also seeking independence. This resulted in the active involvement of the Indian Air Force when it dropped food parcels to Jaffna citizens during the SLA siege of June 1987 (Spencer, 2002). The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord, which was signed on July 29th that year by President Jayewardene and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, stated that the Sri Lankan government would allow the devolution of self-determination power to the Northern and Eastern Provinces, and the granting of official status to the Tamil language

(Roberts, 2013). To keep order in the North and East of Sri Lanka during this transition period (1987-1990), the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) oversaw a ceasefire and the disarmament of several moderate militant groups, although the LTTE refused to disarm, leading to full-scale conflict between the IPKF and the LTTE. This three-year conflict not only severely weakened many of the remaining cultural ties between the Sri Lanka Tamils and India, but it simultaneously led the Sri Lankan government to request that India should leave the island as they became concerned about potential peace accords between the LTTE and the Indian government (De Silva, 2000). Following Gandhi's eventual defeat in the December 1989 Indian elections the IPKF withdrew from Sri Lanka, their 32 month peace mission had cost over 1200 soldiers their lives and had created long-lasting mistrust between the two nations (Uyangoda, 2007). Rajiv Gandhi was ultimately assassinated by a LTTE suicide bomber in 1991 at the behest of LTTE leader Prabhakaran, who believed the ex-Prime Minister to be against the Tamil Eelam independence process. As a result, India remained a passive bystander to the conflict following the assassination (Roberts, 2009).

The conflict between the SLA and the LTTE continued unabated until 2002, with significant LTTE landmarks being the massacre of 600 policemen in June 1990, the assassination of Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa in May 1993, the suicide bomb attack at the Central Bank in Colombo in October 1997 (killing 90 and injuring 1,400), and the truck bomb attack on Kandy's Temple of the Tooth (one of Buddhism's holiest shrines) in January 1998 (Pratap, 2003). Throughout this period the SLA made few significant territorial or tactical gains, with the ruthless and unpredictable nature of the LTTE's insurgency difficult to attack or defend against (Selvadurai & Smith, 2014). However, in 2002, with mounting casualties and fears of increased international pressure following the September 11 attacks in the USA, the LTTE declared their willingness to explore peaceful settlements to the conflict. With the help of the Norwegian government serving as a mediator, the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a permanent cease-fire agreement on February 22nd 2002, resulting in commercial air flights beginning to Jaffna, and the LTTE opening the key A9 highway through the Northern Province (Roberts, 2009). Further successes were made at peace talks in Thailand, Norway, Germany and Japan later in 2002 and 2003, where both sides agreed to a possible federal solution, and the LTTE rescinded its previous demand for independent statehood. While the 2002 ceasefire agreement proved to be more successful than previous efforts, disagreements over the distribution of aid to the LTTE controlled regions following the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, and the election of hard-line Sinhalese nationalist Mahinda Rajapaksa as president in 2005, saw a new round of violence erupting in December 2005

(Harrison, 2012). According to many observers, Rajapaksa's election changed the balance of forces away from the peace process and toward an inevitable violent conclusion to the war (Shastri, 2009).

Following the LTTE officially withdrawing from peace talks indefinitely in April 2006, and Rajapaksa's government formally abandoning the 2002 cease-fire agreement in January 2008, a violent conclusion to the 27 years of war became ostensibly unavoidable (Ratnapalan, 2012). Throughout 2008, the SLA advanced on an increasingly desperate LTTE, capturing major strongholds such as Vellankulam, Vavuniya and Pooneryn, as the last fighting remnants of the Tamil militants became gradually more encircled. This sudden surge in aggression by the Sri Lankan government came as a surprise to many in the Northern Province who, despite the SLA's capture of the Eastern Province in 2008, did not expect the SLA to attempt to defeat the LTTE with such a sudden and ruthless campaign.

"We were in the dark. We never knew. We knew the LTTE was going to lose, but it was the loss of life that was so surprising. Why did there have to be so many?" – Key Informant 1, (24th February, 2015).

The SLA attacked the major administrative centre of the LTTE, Kilinochchi, in late November 2008, with both sides taking heavy casualties (see Fig.5). The capture of the town on January 2nd, 2009 was a significant blow to the LTTE's image as a potent military force, many onlookers

Figure 5: The destroyed Kilinochchi water tower, bombed by LTTE in 2009



Source: Author (2015)

predicted the sustained campaign of the SLA would place unbearable pressure on the LTTE's fragmented resistance, leading to a potentially negotiated end to the conflict (Ratnapalan, 2012).

However, the final four months of the conflict would involve some of the most horrific, and definitely most controversial, scenes of the 27 year conflict. These final stages were characterised by increased brutality against civilians, indiscriminate artillery shelling of hospitals and ‘No-Fire Zones’ (areas in which internally displaced persons (IDPs) had been told to seek refuge from the fighting), kamikaze-style air attacks by LTTE pilots on Colombo, and forced conscription of civilians to fight for the SLA (Selvadurai & Smith, 2013). Both sides were accused of committing human rights violations by the United Nations Human Rights Watch, with the Sri Lankan government suspected of “slaughtering” civilians with intentional bombing of the No-Fire Zones, and the LTTE believed to be shooting civilians who attempted to flee the violence (see Fig.6). Gordon Weiss, a UN spokesman based in Colombo, described the situation at the end of the war as a “bloodbath”, and stated that both sides were guilty of the “large-scale killing of civilians” (Weiss, 2011).

Figure 6: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)



Source: <http://prachatai.com/journal/2009/05/24249>,
(access date: May 20th, 2015)

The war ended on May 16th 2009 with the capturing of the last coastal region of LTTE influence by the SLA, resulting in the capture of many rebels, the majority of whom remain in unnamed prison camps today.

“There are 14,000 LTTE ex-combatants missing; they are in unknown custody centres, have migrated or are dead. But if they had migrated, their families would know...” –
Key Informant 1, (24th February, 2015).

Two days later, the death of LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was announced, with President Rajapaksa delivering a victory address to Parliament the following day declaring Sri Lanka liberated from terrorism, and stating the government’s commitment to a potential

political solution (Weiss, 2011). However, despite these initial good intentions, the war recovery effort under Rajapaksa's government did not address any of the underlying causes of the war, such as the Sri Lanka Tamil community's desire for self-determination, nor were there any attempts at an independent and inclusive Truth and Reconciliation Commission, such as that which was conducted in South Africa following the demise of Apartheid (Sánchez-Cacicedo, 2014). Instead, the reconstruction and development of the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country following the war's end focused solely on the infrastructural and economic aspects of the region, disregarding the immense cultural, social and mental trauma that had been experienced during 26 years of conflict (Uyangoda, 2010). The war left many emotional and physical scars on countless victims throughout Sri Lanka, and with the conflict having only concluded six years ago, the post-conflict development situation that is ongoing is both a tentative and dynamic process.

2.6 Present day Sri Lanka

Considering that Sri Lanka has been ravaged by a three-decade long civil conflict, the country's achievements in terms of national development are remarkable (Winslow & Woost, 2004). Sri Lanka features among countries considered to be experiencing High Human Development, and in the 2014 Human Development Index, it was ranked 73rd out of 187 countries listed (UNDP, 2014). In fact, Sri Lanka's HDI value far outstrips many other 'developing' nations, particularly those in South Asia (see Table.1)

Table 1: Human Development statistics: Comparison of Sri Lanka to South Asia/World

Country	Life Expectancy (Yrs)	GDP per capita (US\$)	Literacy Rate (%)	Infant Mortality (per 1000)	Corruption Index Rank	HDI Rank
Sri Lanka	74.7	8,862	91.2	8	=85 th	73 rd
Pakistan	66.6	4,360	54.9	69	126 th	146 th
India	65.0	5,050	62.8	44	=85 th	135 th
Thailand	74.4	13,586	93.5	11	=85 th	89 th
USA	78.9	50,859	94.4	6	17 th	5 th
UK	80.5	34,694	99.9	4	14 th	14 th
World	68.3	13,599	81.2	35	N/A	N/A

Source: UNDP (2014) & Transparency International (2015)

Sri Lanka has made great strides forward within its health and education services, leading to greatly improved rates of literacy and life expectancy. The National Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (NPRGS) is the prominent framework from which the government has

undertaken the majority of its pro-growth, pro-income and pro-redistribution policies. Whereas nearly 16 percent of the population lived under the poverty line in 2005, only 7.6 percent are believed to live in poverty today (UNDP, 2014). Sri Lanka has also experienced success in the completion of several of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in the areas of gender equality in school enrolment, increased universal primary school enrolment and a growth in the availability of reproductive health services (Wijerathna et al, 2014). However, despite the successes in development experienced within Sri Lanka in recent times, the country is still attempting to recover from both the destruction of the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004 and almost three decades of civil war. According to Uyangoda (2010: 105), the "LTTE's military defeat may not necessarily mark an end to the ethnic tensions in Sri Lanka, but rather may simply redefine the tensions and tools to political ones in the post-civil war phase..." providing a tremendous stumbling block for any nationwide reconciliation or developmental success. Development of the country in the post-conflict era under the government of President Mahinda Rajapaksa has been characterised by its inequality across a variety of socio-economic and geographical factors, accompanied by growing cronyism and corruption within the political classes (De Votta, 2013). The Northern and Eastern Provinces in particular have not received the required government investment since the conflict's conclusion, leading to further growth of political disillusionment and cynicism among the Tamil majority of these regions (Roberts, 2013). This inequality in development contradicted the raised expectations among all communities (Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim and Burgher) of sustainable peace and prosperity following the end of the war. This optimism was enhanced by Rajapaksa's presidential address in May 2009, where he stated "there won't be any minorities in this country after today...I want everybody to feel like one" (Arambewela & Arambewela, 2010: 370). Despite this pledge of unity the vision of a cohesive future has not yet occurred. However, the recent victory of Maithripala Sirisena over Rajapaksa in the January 2015 Presidential elections has been seen by the majority as a step towards a more integrated Sri Lanka.

In 2014 the Sri Lankan branch of the United Nations Development Programme released a report entitled *Youth and Development: Towards A More Inclusive Future* (UNDP Sri Lanka, 2014), which outlined their recognition of youth as being a key factor in achieving the country's development goals. The report targets education, employment, health and well-being, civic and political participation, and post-war social integration as all being key factors for Sri Lanka's development, in all of which the youth demographic will be crucially important. While the report lacks specific statistics of current problems, potential solutions, and does not directly

address the issues apparent in regions such as Jaffna District, the recognition of UNDP Sri Lanka that youth issues are key to the overall development of Sri Lanka, is a positive signal.

Overall, there is little doubt the 27 year conflict adds a distinctly unique dimension to any development approach in Sri Lanka, and despite its cessation in 2009, the country has many post-conflict socio-economic challenges that could be potentially more fragile and inflammatory than in other nations (Shastri, 2009). One such issue is that of youth unemployment, a topic which has long provided academics, development institutions and governments alike with a degree of trepidation and concern. The following chapter comprises a literature review that will explain the current extent of research within the fields of post-conflict development and youth unemployment, thereby illustrating the timely significance of this research.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The increase in cooperation between inter-governmental organisations, transnational aid agencies, and national governments in various peace operations and post-conflict development missions since the end of the Cold War, has created intense debate on how the different actors involved should operate to provide the most successful and efficient outcomes (Frerks, 2006). As a result, the fields of ‘peace and conflict studies’ and ‘post-conflict development’ have greatly expanded in recent times as institutions seek to better understand how and why conflicts begin, and how best to recover from those which have ended. Despite this surge in conflict-related research, relatively little information or documented evidence exists about the effectiveness of post-conflict development schemes, as many have only been created and utilised since the end of the Cold War (Smith, 2004). Coincidentally, youth employment and youth marginalisation research have also only come to the fore in the post-Cold War era, with theories such as the ‘youth bulge’ and ‘second sons’, attempting to explain the relationship between large-scale youth disillusionment and civil unrest (Goldstone, 2001). With youth unemployment often being recognised as both a potential cause and an effect of conflict, greater exploration of the circumstances that result in youth-based civil unrest needs to be a priority for researchers.

This literature review will attempt to identify those ‘gaps’ within the current post-conflict and youth employment discourses. By engaging with literature from as widely as possible, a significant base of information has been generated, which as a result allows for a more holistic view of the post-conflict youth employment situation in Sri Lanka’s Jaffna District. Through an examination of international post-conflict scenarios, the issues associated with high youth unemployment in other developing nations, the history of youth marginalisation in Sri Lanka, and youth employment strategies previously utilised throughout the world, this literature review identifies relevant theory and related examples which help to explain where this investigation is situated within the wider field of post-conflict development research.

3.2 Post-conflict development

Sri Lanka has experienced one of the world’s longest and most divisive civil wars (1983-2009) of the last fifty years. Only after almost three decades of fighting and five failed peace negotiations, including the unsuccessful deployment of the Indian Peacekeeping Force from 1987 to 1990, was a decisive, though brutal and controversial, peace secured in 2009. However,

as in many other previous post-conflict situations, achieving a sustained peace is an incredibly complex and challenging task (Uyangoda, 2010). What is defined as a 'successful' peace process is in itself a fiercely debated topic in theoretical post-conflict literature, with seemingly no clear consensus on a single exact definition (Frerks, 2006). According to Downs and Stedman (2002: 51) two goals must be completed in order to achieve post-conflict success; "the termination of large-scale violence while the implementers are present", and "the termination of war on a self-enforcing basis so that the implementers can go home without fear of a resurgence of fighting". These two criteria however, omit one of Collier and Hoeffler's (2008) "distinctive challenges" for post-conflict societies, which is economic recovery, coupled with the reduction of risk of recurring conflict. Increasingly, post-conflict peace processes are recognising the importance of a 'constructive' approach to peace-building, with conflicts becoming viewed less as costly games played by those in power, and more as a result of institutionalised social, political or economic problems within the conflict area (Schweitzer, 2012). 'Constructive' peace-building theory calls for the peace-building process to chiefly focus on the societal aspects of the past conflict, and to address three basic concepts of self-monitoring by the combatant groups following the cessation of violence. These are; socially-based (non-violent) defence, civil society post-conflict transformation, and civilian (un-armed) peacekeeping (Schweitzer, 2012).

Another such theory of post-conflict peacebuilding is Duffield's (2001) 'New Humanitarianism', which seeks to prevent future conflict by addressing the fundamental underlying causes of unrest through the promotion of democracy and human development. According to Duffield (2001), the 'new wars' that have engulfed the global 'South' since the end of the Cold War are mostly internal or regional forms of conflicts, rather than traditional inter-state conflicts, and as a result they pose more long-term security risks to the affected populations, including sustained poverty, displacement and disenfranchisement. Due to the decisive victory of the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the post-conflict process in Sri Lanka was not able to embody the New Humanitarianism that Duffield envisaged, which was arguably better displayed in the conclusion of other conflicts such as the Sierra Leonean civil war, where UN intervention, which included a huge peacekeeping mission to protect civilians and allow for democratic elections, transformed into an all-inclusive post-war promotion of a reconciliatory human development process (Duffield, 2001). Conversely, due to the Sri Lankan civil war ending with the victory of one warring party over the other, rather than through a sustained ceasefire or peaceful resolution, as promoted by Duffield, the country has yet to overcome the complicated

task of trying to ‘mend’ a society that still contains hugely divisive issues that were never properly resolved (Goodhand, 2010).

A third post-conflict peacebuilding theory that could be potentially used to assist in Sri Lanka’s future development is Security Sector Reform (SSR). This theory involves the reorganisation and improvement of “all those organisations which have authority to use, or order the use of, force, or the threat of force, to protect the state and its citizens, as well as those civil structures that are responsible for their management and oversight” (Ferguson, 2010: 135). This means a plethora of state actors including; the military, intelligence services, police, judicial and penal services, Ministry of Defence, and the legislative and executive branches of government, must all be subject to revision and change following a conflict’s conclusion. Ineffectual governance in these particular capacities of governance is seen as hugely contributory to the breakdown of a nation, particularly if corruption is present (Ferguson, 2010). With a dramatic growth in nepotism and cronyism blatantly apparent in former President Mahinda Rajapaksa’s government, the necessary re-evaluating of these security institutions during Sri Lanka’s immediate post-conflict period did not occur, leading to continued disillusionment of the increasingly marginalised Tamil communities (De Votta, 2013). According to Ferguson, the “need to prioritise SSR cannot be overemphasised” in nations such as Sri Lanka, where the implementation of half-hearted reintegration efforts, and prevailing high youth unemployment, drive ostracism and discontent amongst minority communities and young people alike (Ferguson, 2010: 144).

The success of the initial post-conflict development process in Sri Lanka, since the conclusion of the Civil War only six years ago, has divided opinion among many observers. Due to the conflict’s separatist nature, the members of the vanquished Tamil minority have experienced vastly different post-conflict sentiments than those of the Sinhalese majority (Athukorala, 2014). While the Sri Lankan government in the immediate aftermath of the conflict stressed the importance and success of major infrastructural development in the war-torn Northern and Eastern Provinces, such as paving of roads and completion of the Colombo to Jaffna railway, many key developmental and post-conflict reconciliation aspects have been neglected. The implementation of conflict trauma counselling was completely neglected by the government, while international aid NGOs, who sought permission to deliver ‘Mental Health Care’ services in areas of previous violence, were often denied access and asked to leave (Jordans *et al*, 2013). The importance of community-based livelihoods within the development process was also not addressed by government policy, resulting in areas such as Jaffna District, where the majority of people rely on small-scale industries such as agriculture, fishing, and

handicrafts for their livelihoods, becoming increasingly plagued with problems associated with food insecurity, unemployment, underemployment, and limited access to resources (Derges, 2013). Sustained problems in areas such as these have affected certain groups within the Jaffna District more than others, with the region's youth population, a societal group which traditionally suffers proportionally more than others in post-conflict areas, being subjected to increasingly problematic and challenging social, political and economic forces (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010).

3.3 The problem of youth unemployment

Theories regarding the importance of an engaged and active youth population within a functioning society have long been debated among policy makers and academics alike. It has long been argued that large groups of disaffected youth within a country correspond to a growth in conflict and violence and, while this is still the dominant mantra among the majority of academics, increasingly revisionist thought is stating that this may not always be accurate (Gough, Langevang & Owus, 2013). While there is evidence that high levels of youth unemployment often occur in conjunction with higher levels of unrest in society, Izzi argues (2013: 106) that the frequently made argument that “youth unemployment causes violence” lacks both sophistication and a holistic view of the broader socio-economic context typically present in these instances of violence. Following the September 11 attacks in the USA, one of the popularised media narratives attributed the growth of certain countries' youth populations as a potential explanation for terrorism and global insecurity, stating that large cohorts of young people place a strain on social institutions such as the labour market and educational systems, resulting in grievances that may escalate into violence (Urdal, 2004). These sentiments aligned with the ‘youth bulge’ theory, a demographic explanation coined by researcher Gary Fuller in the mid-1990s, where he argued that nations with excessively high populations of particularly young male adults lead to social unrest, political instability and conflict (Urdal, 2004). Although the claim that youth bulges innately cause violent conflict has a long history, due to the prevalence of conflicts in nations with distinctive demographic features such as Sierra Leone, Rwanda, and Somalia since the end of the Cold War, the issue of population-related conflict has gained increasing attention. Many researchers, including Goldstone (2001: 67), who stated “youth have played a prominent role in political violence throughout recorded history, and the existence of a ‘youth bulge’ has historically been associated with times of political crisis”, believe that large amounts of youth within a population are inexorably linked with that nation's political or societal unrest. Some more aggressive youth bulge theories make far bolder

predications, with several suggesting that a country with 40 percent or more of its population under the age of 30 will have crossed the “danger threshold” that makes violence within these societies two and a half times more likely (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). Although Sri Lanka’s youth population has never reached these proposed thresholds, the nation’s young people, particularly those in the Tamil minority, have been blamed for contributing to the civil unrest that has plagued Sri Lanka for decades (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010).

Policy makers in the developing world have become increasingly aware that high levels of national youth employment are a clear indicator of a healthy economy and a generally well-off society (Gough, Langevang & Owus, 2013). In solely economic terms, mass youth unemployment is now recognised as being a significant inhibitor for the growth of an economy, typically leading to reduced tax revenue, wasted human capital and reduced production. This has led to this issue’s resolution being increasingly high on the agenda of world governments and institution, as youth employment solutions could prove integral to the wider international solutions for concerns surrounding labour management, poverty alleviation and economic development in the global South (World Bank Group, 2013). Socially, youth also represent key societal stakeholders, with an engaged youth population likely to correlate with political stability and a more active democratic civil society (Okafor, 2011). As a result of his 2011 research, Okafor (2011: 358) was able to ascertain that one of the developing world’s largest and fastest growing nations, Nigeria, had been experiencing sustained “anti-social activities such as political thuggery, militancy, restiveness and other social vices” as a result of joblessness among the nation’s youth population. For Nigeria, a nation with vast human and natural resources, the ability to engage its youth population in fulfilling employment and the democratic process, could provide the key to rapid significant growth in the nation’s living standards (Okafor, 2011). Researchers also believe that the successful integration of youth into sustained employment is likely to prevent subsequent youth bulge anomalies, as statistically modern families of two fully employed parents are likely to have fewer children, leading to a declining birth rate among the general population. As a result, the general relationship between civil unrest and age structure bulges is far less apparent in developed countries, where both declining birth rates and far superior utilisation of the youth labour force ensures greater “demographic dividends” (Urdal, 2012: 69). According to Urdal (2012), the key to avoiding youth-based instability within an economy or society is providing educational or employment opportunities during periods of economic decline, and ensuring unemployed youths do not faced prolonged marginalisation or social exclusion.

Despite modern perceptions, youth unemployment is not only a process that affects developing nations, however, it is traditionally in the global South that the issues associated

with the problem are exacerbated (Gough, Langevang & Owus, 2013). Young people in the global South traditionally face greater challenges within social and economic environments, with rates of particularly high unemployment and underemployment leading to idleness, marginalisation and potential exclusion from adult status (Garcia & Farès, 2008). Fierce competition among young people typically exists, with places in higher education providers, vocational training programmes and apprenticeship placements in short supply. In many cases this has led to a growth in unique employment approaches rather than engaging in traditional formalised education, for example the creation of their own businesses from a young age, the building of employment sharing networks that allow for reliable seasonal employment, and migration in search of new work or education opportunities (Gough, Langevang & Owus, 2013).

While it is universally recognised that developing countries are at particular risk of youth unemployment problems, defining ‘employment’ and ‘un/underemployment’ in a global South context remains a tricky process due to the difficulty in recognising the boundaries of where unemployment begins. As Izzi (2013: 108) argues, not only is unemployment “difficult to measure, track over time and compare across space” due to the predominantly informal nature of the employment process in these nations, but those who would state they are currently ‘employed’, often find themselves in work that is “irregular, insecure, casual and precarious” (Gough, Langevang & Owus, 2013: 94). According to the 2013 World Development Report, unemployment rates for young people in the Global South are typically around three times more than the general population, despite the recent emphasis being placed on secondary education and upskilling of youth in accordance with United Nations Millennium Development Goals (World Bank, 2013). This phenomenon is definitely true within Sri Lanka, a nation where conflict and marginalisation has left large numbers of young people even more vulnerable and systemically disadvantaged in terms of utilising or growing their human capital (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010). However, despite the entrenched perceptions of negativity surrounding large youth populations in developing countries, contrasting theories of the immense potential of this human resource base are also beginning to emerge.

While large negative ‘youth bulge’ theories currently dominate global political narratives, there are also increasingly arguments against the idea of youth bulge instigated conflict, with many emphasising that the theory over-simplifies the many incredibly complex factors that are involved in a conflict (Izzi, 2013). One of the many factors that can contribute to youth-led violence is the lack of employment opportunities. Generations that are significantly larger than those previous are likely to encounter societal ‘bottlenecks’ and increased societal congestion and competition (Collier & Hoeffler, 2001). Coincidentally, the unemployment and

inactivity of youth, often associated with this overwhelmed labour market, can lead to the marginalisation and ostracising of this sector of society. Collier and Hoeffler (2001) argue that it is only after this breakdown between state and citizens that disillusioned youth are left with no alternative to unemployment and poverty but to join in civil disobedience or rebellion as an alternative way to generate income. Urdal (2004: 14) continues this argument by stating that “the conflict potential of youth bulges strongly correlates to the availability of education”. A common factor why youth often look to subvert institutions of authority is because their aspirations of education, and subsequent employment and political influence, have not been met (Urdal, 2004). This is especially true of educated youth who have failed to gain meaningful employment, or, as Braungart states, “the underemployment and unemployment prospects for university educated youth in many developing countries...enlarges the reservoir of latent rebellion from which revolutionary politics can be drawn” (Braungart, 1984: 89). This phenomenon is particularly true of Sri Lanka, where the large cohorts of educated rural youth have often been an unsettling force, especially during the two armed youth insurrections in the South led by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People’s Liberation Front: JVP) first in 1971, and latterly in 1988-89. These insurrections, while intrinsically linked to the three decades of violence that Sri Lanka experienced, were not, however, a continuation of the nation’s ethnic and political conflict, but rather a cry for greater employment opportunities and societal involvement for the nation’s young people (Amarasuriya, 2010).

The below table (see Table 2) shows that Sri Lanka’s current overall employment figure compares favourably with other countries in South Asia and the world at large (UNDP, 2014). However, the youth unemployment rate (defined by the UN as between ages 15-24) is worryingly high, especially for a nation attempting to recover and develop in a post-conflict setting. While statistical evidence points both toward and against a direct relationship between a nation’s age structure and its propensity for political violence, more reliable evidence suggests that sustained investment by a government in the education sector results in lower conflict risks (Gough, Langevang & Owus, 2013). Furthermore, research has shown that inflated youth populations can be a vehicle for a nation’s economic development, if the correct structures are put in place to best utilise a growing labour force (Urdal, 2012). Therefore the youth bulge, and subsequent theories that both support and dispel its concepts, should potentially be evolved and adapted so that they are providing recommendations on how best to utilise the immense resource that youth can provide, rather than damning youth as being only potential instigators of unrest. Such revision could be particularly pertinent to both the history and future of the youth experience in Sri Lanka, a nation with both historic marginalisation of youth, and the

potential to better utilise the nation's young people, as they seek to continue their post-conflict development process.

Table 2: Employment statistics: Comparisons of Sri Lanka with South Asia/World

Country	Unemployment rate (% of total employment)	Youth Unemployment rate (% of ages 15-24)	Child Labour (% of 5-14)	Paid Maternity leave (days)
Sri Lanka	5.0	17.3	N/A	94
Pakistan	7.7	5.5	N/A	94
India	9.3	10.7	11.8	94
Thailand	0.6	2.8	8.3	45
USA	7.4	16.2	N/A	N/A
UK	7.9	21.0	N/A	273
World	7.5	14.4 (UN est.)	N/A	N/A

Source: UNDP (2014)

3.4 Youth marginalisation and unemployment in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has struggled with problems associated with youth employment for nearly five decades. As a result, several hypotheses have been offered to explain the social, economic and political reasons for this employment imbalance. These range from the nation's shortcomings within its education system, the decades of civil war, the perceived 'laziness' and poor work attitudes of some young people, and the social and cultural exclusion of certain minorities in gaining access to both education and subsequent employment (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010). The majority of young Sri Lankans find it difficult to gain employment regardless of skill or qualification, with educated young people making up a third of Sri Lanka's unemployed, and youth accounting for a third of all Sri Lankans in 'informal' or 'insecure' employment (Gunatilaka, 2008). Although historically Sri Lanka has been regarded as a model South Asian nation with successful social policies, the systemic marginalisation of youth within Sri Lankan society has led to social unrest and violent insurgencies within the country over the last three decades, often independent of the ongoing ethnically-based civil war. Disillusionment and frustration, particularly among educated rural youth, is still seen today as an inhibitor to potential sustained political stability (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). Much of this unrest is related to the major challenges faced in providing employment and satisfying other aspirations of youth throughout the country, with an acute shortage of good jobs contributing to the growing exodus of young Sri Lankans to Europe, North America, the Middle East and

Australia. Despite the trend of an increasingly educated youth labour force in Sri Lanka, the main source of employment for both youth and adults remains the informal sector, providing numerous employment obstacles including job security, liveable wages, exploitation, and gender and ethnic based discrimination (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010).

Since the beginning of this century overall unemployment levels in Sri Lanka have halved. However, this has not resulted in proportional improvements among the youth population, with nearly 80 percent of the nation's unemployed in 2006 being within the youth age bracket, a third of which had over 10 years of schooling (Gunatilaka, 2008). Different aspects of Sri Lanka's social, cultural and economic environment have contributed to this phenomenon, all of which have been aggravated by the years of civil war. In fact, the country's sustained period of conflict, according to Gunatilaka, Mayer and Volopivec (2010) has left young Sri Lankans more critically disadvantaged with respect to utilising their human capital. These researchers believe that even before the immense physical and psychological trauma experienced by young people during the civil war has been taken into account, the economic hardship, displacement, impoverishment and disrupted schooling as a result of the conflict, have made the future prospects of successful employment for these youth incredibly challenging (Gunatilaka, Mayer and Volopivec, 2010). Sri Lanka has maintained a policy of heavy investment in social welfare since its independence in 1948, providing free education from primary to tertiary levels (Anand & Kanbur, 1991). As a result of this policy, and the Sri Lankan's governments' efforts under the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals to achieve 100 percent enrolment at primary and secondary schooling levels, Sri Lanka's labour force continues to become increasingly well educated. However, as this process has occurred, Sri Lanka's unemployed population has become significantly better educated as well, leading to growing disillusionment with the education system among youth, as they receive no tangible employment advantages following higher learning achievements. According to Guneseckera (2005) one key obstacle preventing employment among educated youth, particularly in the private sector, is a lack of English language comprehension and writing ability. Typically, those Sri Lankan citizens of higher economic status are able to access and monopolise superior economic opportunities through the English language, which has long been viewed as a "language of privilege and looked on as the sword that divides society between the haves and the have-nots" (Guneseckera, 2005: 40). As a result, youth raised in less affluent situations find it more difficult to acquire English language skills through the publicly provided education system, and thus remain in danger of failing to gain the requisite human capital needed to compete in the highly competitive private sector employment market. Guneseckera (2005) believes that those among

the youth labour force that resist the temptation to depart from Sri Lanka in search of labouring work in the Middle East, face an employment search that can be an exhausting, frustrating and demoralising process. However, it is not only the education and economic processes within Sri Lanka that make it difficult for young Sri Lankans to gain employment as, according to previous research, it is also engrained social and cultural structures that assist in creating these employment problems.

In Sri Lanka, the successful transition into adulthood is often defined by financial independence and marriage. This process has become increasingly complicated by economic, social and employment obstacles, preventing particularly young males from being considered 'real' adults (Neary, 2013). Social hierarchies can also lead to marginalisation of major groups within society, especially when intergenerational aspects come to the fore. While the social welfare policies of early Sri Lankan governments provided education, health and agrarian reform, social status due to poverty, ethnicity or age still limits the upward mobility of many youth. Sinhalese families are particularly anxious that their children should not be labelled a '*rasthiyadukarayek*' (layabout) or '*diunu wenne nethi*' (not progressing) so that the entrenched class barriers close for them indefinitely (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). Harini Amarasuriya argues that these rigid forms of social expectations and hierarchy create "structures of exclusion and discrimination based on class, caste, gender and ethnicity" (Amarasuriya, 2010: 201). Amarasuriya (2010) also believes that the exclusion created by entrenched hierarchies manifest into a society where young people of lower status are reluctant to seek jobs in the private sector, or outside avenues that are traditionally deemed appropriate. Social rigidities within both the Tamil and Sinhalese cultures, and the inescapability of the family and community patronage systems of Sri Lanka, mean that young people, despite any obvious talents or significant investment in education, may not achieve the social mobility or economic gains that a high achieving counterpart might gain in a western nation (Thangarajah, 2002). As a result, employment choices made by young people in Sri Lanka are typically shaped not by their talents and goals, but by the communities, adults and institutions they encounter in the formative years of their lives.

In Sri Lanka, violence that has occurred as a result of youth disengagement and marginalisation has led to the perception that youth are an inherent problem until they enter into marriage. The anti-government insurgences led by Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) in 1971 and 1989, and the separatist war of the LTTE, were largely successful due to the recruitment of young people, leading to policy makers perceiving youth as 'ripe for violence' (Amarasuriya, 2010). Consequently, the Sri Lankan government has traditionally responded to youth unrest

with either aggressive state repression and violence, or ineffective programs targeting youth through cultural and sporting activities, or poverty alleviation schemes (Hettige, 2002). Historically, none of these interventions have recognised the legitimacy of youth anger and frustration at obvious defects in the country's social and economic policies, particularly those relating to ethnic minorities, marginalised groups and rural areas. According to the National Youth Survey conducted in 2000, although Sri Lankan young people listed social justice as a key social value, the majority felt the country was not a just society, and that the fundamental causes of dissatisfaction were a "feeling of injustice, a lack of equity, and a denial of opportunities in society" (Hettige, 2002: 34). These beliefs, coupled with an awareness of Sri Lanka's continuing battle with political corruption and nepotism, have added to many young people's perceptions of discrimination and an inability to direct the individual outcomes of their own lives. The National Youth Survey also demonstrated the widespread attraction of socialist and communist political ideology among youth, a predictable phenomenon due to the historic success of the JVP's youth-led anti-government insurrections in the 1970s and 1980s (Hettige, 2002: 32). Life experiences, featuring many examples of institutions failing to meet their aspirations, provide easy recruitment ammunition for these anti-government movements to attract large cohorts of disengaged youth.

Issues surrounding youth unemployment and marginalisation are particularly pertinent in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. These issues have both occurred prior to, and also following, the nation's three decades of civil war, but were also significantly exacerbated as a result of the propensity of Tamil youth to be drawn into the separatist struggle (Mayer, 2004). Prior to the civil war, Tamil youth experienced centuries of significant caste, class and opportunity barriers that prevented them from achieving their best employment potential and subsequent social mobility. Due to the predominantly Hindu beliefs of Sri Lankan Tamils, the caste system of social ordering has remained a key aspect within communities in the Northern Province (Thangarajah, 2002). This system typically confines youth to the occupation or career of their parents, with women in particular facing significant gender constraints as a result of cultural attitudes. What is perceived as 'correct behaviour' for a young woman heavily influences her employment choices, with certain occupations (clothing factories and tourism work) being particularly vulnerable to exploitation and social labelling that can jeopardize future marital and economic opportunities (Amarasuriya, 2010). In recent decades more young Tamils have attempted to go against traditional cultural norms, many being influenced by a growth in international exposure to the freedoms and social mobility of their cultures. The LTTE, especially in its infancy, was regarded as an appealing force for change among Tamil

youth, who regarded it as an anti-elite, anti-discrimination movement that was trying to break pre-existing class and caste divisions (Thangarajah, 2002). Despite their main objective being the creation of a separatist Tamil homeland, the LTTE also attempted to break established social and cultural conformity among Tamils, with the lessening of caste barriers, and greatly increasing opportunities for women, examples of social restructuring during the short period of LTTE governance in the Northern Province (1992-2007) (Roberts, 2009). However, as a result of the period of militarisation under the LTTE, and the subsequent security concerns, the young people of the Northern Province have been subjected to increased surveillance and monitoring from the Sri Lankan government since the conflict's end. This not only severely affects the mobility of youth within this region, and their subsequent employment opportunities, but also encourages pre-existing discrimination within the Sri Lankan civil service (Amarasuriya, 2010).

Discrimination in public sector employment, as a result of long-lasting ethnic tension between Sinhalese and Tamil, is an expressed concern among Northern Province youth (Amarasuriya, 2010). Regardless of the years of civil conflict, Tamil youth perceive that they are unlikely to be able to gain high level public sector employment, due to ethnic preference among Sinhalese officials. These perspectives, regardless of their statistical accuracy (and research has suggested that ethnic discrimination is very much occurring within the Sri Lankan civil service), present a significant mental barrier between well-educated Tamil youth and securing a high level government job (Gunatilaka, Mayer and Volopivec, 2010). This perceived lack of opportunities has contributed to the recent phenomenon of many high achieving Tamil young people migrating to western nations where their skills and hard-work are more likely to receive tangible rewards and promotion (Hugo, 2013). Students in the Northern Province have a lower educational achievement than the national average, while northern Tamils are second only to Muslim youth in the Eastern Province in terms of the longest wait period between the end of their formal learning process and them gaining full-time employment (Mayer & Salih, 2003). The growth in 'casualization' (increase of informal sector jobs) in the Northern Province, mainly as a result of the war and the economic reforms of the Sri Lankan government in the post-war period, has lengthened this waiting period and forced young Tamils to undertake any form of employment that they can find, not necessarily within the industry or location where their skills would best be utilised (Amarasuriya, 2010). Despite the potential for discrimination, and unlikelihood of receiving promotion to positions of authority, the majority of Northern Province citizens view government jobs in the public sector as the most desirable and secure. Those of a higher socio-economic upbringing, or a higher social caste typically find the

acquisition of government employment far easier. Conversely, Uyangoda (2003:47) believes that the public sector employability of those within the lower echelons of the caste system are “limited by the rigid and inflexible structures of dominance”. Public sector employment is desirable to Northern Province Tamils, not only because of the tangible financial benefits and greater job security, but also because of the status within the community that comes from such a position. Men in particular are more likely to be perceived as sought after for marital purposes if they are working within the government sector. In fact, according to Mayer and Salih (2005), government employment is the top preference among all ethnic groups and both genders within the Northern Province, (typically) regardless of the actual overall quality of the job.

This investigation into the historic and contemporary issues associated with youth unemployment and marginalisation in Sri Lanka demonstrates the country’s persisting problems with best serving and utilising this demographic group. Sri Lanka’s recent history of conflict has done little to assist in this process, while factors such as class, caste, gender, ethnicity and geographic location have exacerbated problems for Sri Lankan young people in gaining meaningful employment (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010). Sri Lanka is at a critical post-conflict juncture, with an emphasis on equity and inclusion for youth within education and labour institutions being the key for a nation chasing rapid economic growth and higher living standards. Initial attempts at post-conflict youth employment strategies have occurred throughout Sri Lanka, to varying levels of success, meaning that the continued implementation and adaption of such policies, in both the private and public sector, will be crucial to Sri Lanka’s long-term prosperity (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010). By taking note of youth employment strategies that have been successful in other countries, policy makers in Sri Lanka can adapt their own practices to address the needs and requirements of young Sri Lankans.

3.5 Youth employment strategies

In recent years, the international peacebuilding community has begun to show interest in youth as a ‘force for peace’, rather than the traditional view of them as a ‘threat to peace’ (Izzi, 2013). With conflicts such as the Sri Lankan, Sierra Leonean and Sudanese civil wars, all vivid reminders of the destructive possibility of disillusioned and marginalised youth, international policymakers have become particularly concerned with the issue of youth unemployment. Such civil conflicts have demonstrated the potential of young people who are idle and lack life prospects to be significantly more likely to become involved in various forms of violence and criminal activity (Betancourt *et al*, 2013). Unsurprisingly, the creation of youth employment

strategies and schemes face many additional challenges when being established in post-conflict situations. Usually these countries' basic infrastructure is in disarray, safety of employees may remain an issue, and there is limited monetary or physical access for the target group to undertake training schemes, even if available. Government institutions providing such employment schemes often suffer from low legitimacy and are plagued by corruption, while human capital in a post-conflict setting is particularly weak (Izzi, 2013). Sri Lanka's attempts to address its post-conflict employment issues among youths have definitely suffered under the aforementioned characteristics, particularly in the Northern Province where the Tamil minority continues to experience marginalisation from the Sinhalese government.

According to Gough, Langevang & Owusu (2013: 95), policies designed to provide employment opportunities for youth typically follow one of three approaches: "increasing economic growth to broaden opportunities for employment; increasing youth capabilities through education and skills training at all levels; or programmatic interventions involving specific tailored-made projects to promote youth employment". Using programmed interventions, as the latter of the approaches suggests, is intended to specifically target the promotion of youth employment as, due to their inexperience, low skill set, and questionable social standing, they require the most assistance in a post-conflict setting (Gough, Langevang & Owusu, 2013). Consequently, the most effective strategies that are implemented in regions of significant youth unemployment typically support, or construct, functioning labour market institutions that promote entrepreneurship, or provide young people with easier pathways to full-time employment. There is debate among various international policy makers regarding the participation of unemployed young people in the creation of these projects. While some believe that youth must be incorporated in the running of the programme to ensure their buy-in and the programme's functional longevity, frequently youth are "treated as passive clients, with a limited ability to shape their own destinies" (Bordonaro and Payne, 2012: 367). A criticism of such programmes by the authors such as Izzi (2013) is that youth are typically regarded as a single homogenous group, regardless of their differing socio-economic, cultural or geographic characteristics, which, without exception, heavily influence the effectiveness of any youth employment policies. A growing emphasis within the youth development industry is the overall message that young people should aspire to become 'job creators' rather than 'job seekers' (Gough, Langevang & Owusu, 2013). By setting up their own enterprises, young people can not only provide a long-term future for their own family, but can be active employers and leaders in their own communities. Many policies are beginning to be created to promote youth entrepreneurship, despite little being known about their long-term success, which Izzi (2013) believes may cause them to fall well short of optimistic expectations, particularly for those in

the context of post-conflict situations. Hadju *et al* (2013), among others, have highlighted how if these programmes miss their targets or provide inadequate support for a sustained period, the short-term benefits are typically lost as the participants lack the experience to withstand any initial challenges which their enterprise may face. Izzi (2013: 103) writes that although the ‘traditional’ youth employment projects, typically under the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF), place the correct emphasis on providing livelihood opportunities and turning youth energy away from recruitment to violence, these projects have long lacked the “rigorous evaluations” that would ensure that they are successful. Izzi believes that these ‘traditional’ projects tend to focus too much on the immediate outcomes, such as job creation, rather than on the long-term vision of a labour market that works for both the employer and potential job-seekers. This criticism, while valid, recognises the temptation for policy makers to seek tangible employment results in the immediate aftermath of a conflict. But the failure to adhere to a long-term vision means that youth employment projects, such as those implemented in Sierra Leone following the conclusion of its civil war in 2002, may not provide sustained benefits to the community following the withdrawal of outside actors (Izzi, 2013). This demonstrates the importance of a development initiative having a ‘bottom-up’ and community focused approach, which also recognises the key period to engage and then disengage from the community.

The Sri Lankan government has increasingly begun to act on various fronts to find a solution to youth unemployment issues. Beginning with attempts to improve and modernise the general education system, the government placed an emphasis on increasing the accessibility of training to youth leaving school, so as to promote their employability. Other such policies have included introducing career counselling programs, improving labour market information for youths, and establishing entrepreneurship schemes. Several of these interventions have gained assistance from the World Bank and the International labour Organisation (ILO), which have become more involved in Sri Lanka since the cessation of the civil conflict (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010). In 2007, the Sri Lankan government launched the *National Action Plan for Youth Employment*, a first-time coherent framework based on in-depth research into the Sri Lankan labour market, a process assisted by the Youth Employment Network (YEN). The plan provided a consistent set of policy recommendations that cover the ‘4-Es’ labour market conceptual framework developed by the ILO, World Bank, and YEN; employment creation, employability, entrepreneurship, and equal opportunity (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010). While the *National Action Plan for Youth Employment* has allowed for coherent planning to occur surrounding the issues of youth employment, many of the promised policies have not yet resulted in obvious changes in the labour market experienced by youth,

particularly in the Northern Province, which was not part of the original 2007 plan. Arunatilake's (2012) study shows the precarious nature of employment in Sri Lanka's informal sector, in which the majority of Sri Lankan youth are forced to engage. Not only is there great insecurity as a result of the temporary nature of their jobs, but workers are deprived of any protection under labour legislation which only protects those under permanent contract. The typically heavy manual nature of these informal sector jobs often leads to adverse health conditions, which greatly affect income-earning potential, made worse by temporary workers having little interaction with labour unions to fight on their behalf (Arunatilake, 2012). As a result of these conditions, and the complicating post-conflict nature of Sri Lanka's development within the Northern Province, the youth employment initiatives must be carefully planned and executed in order to obtain the desired results.

Currently, there is little data concerning the effectiveness of youth employment strategies being employed in Sri Lanka's Northern Province. The region is only five years removed from the catastrophic civil war, and is making small, but sustained progress, towards increasing development (Gunatilaka, Mayer and Volopivec, 2010). As stated above, the successful implementation of youth employment strategies and projects could greatly assist in this post-conflict development process, and allow for the next generation of northern Sri Lankans to live in a better functioning and more unified society.

3.6 Conclusion

Overall, this review of the academic literature surrounding post-conflict scenarios, the issues associated with high youth unemployment in other developing nations, the history of youth marginalisation in Sri Lanka, and youth employment strategies previously utilised throughout the world, demonstrates the importance of the subsequent field-based research into youth unemployment within northern Sri Lanka's Jaffna District. As demonstrated in the literature, youth employment projects have become a popular peacebuilding approach that, not only help to address the issues associated with large number of unemployed young people in a post-conflict environment, but can also provide tangible benefits in creating livelihoods and businesses that engage and enhance post-conflict communities. This literature review has provided several key points, some of which this research hopes to address in more detail:

- ✚ There is a variety of post-conflict development strategies that have been utilised in a wide array of environments, such as Sierra Leone, Sudan, Bosnia and Afghanistan. Cultural, political and economic contexts are hugely important to any potential post-conflict success.

- ✚ The current success of Sri Lanka's post conflict development and rehabilitation process is heavily contested. The initial government emphasis on infrastructure, rather than reconciliation and trauma counselling, has meant that many of the social and cultural causes of the conflict remain unaddressed. Issues such as youth unemployment remain hugely problematic in the areas most affected by the civil war.
- ✚ Theories surrounding the significance of youth employment in development processes are vast and often contradictory. Many of the initial sentiments proclaiming young people as divisive actors causing unrest, have been replaced by more nuanced theories that recognise the immense developmental catalyst potential of engaged and employed young people.
- ✚ The history of youth unemployment and marginalisation of young people in Sri Lanka may have played a role in the ferocity and longevity of the country's civil war. As a result, there is a great need for addressing the severe youth unemployment issues within areas such as Jaffna District, a solution which may not only see the improvement in the political and ethnic stability of the region, but could hopefully also coincide with greater development and economic success.
- ✚ Factors such as class, caste, gender, ethnicity and geographic location have exacerbated problems for young Sri Lankans in gaining meaningful employment, particularly those within the post-conflict provinces.
- ✚ Successful youth employment strategies involve both the education and training of young people, and the supporting of the labour market through government, civil society, and private sector collaboration.
- ✚ Effective implementation of youth employment strategies and projects would galvanise the post-conflict development process in Jaffna District, and allow for the next generation of northern Sri Lankans to achieve their ambitions.

Due to the relatively scarce nature of research surrounding youth employment efforts in post-conflict regions, it is hoped that this research will provide relevant data and examples for both the fields of post-conflict development and youth employment research. Having now explored the relevant academic literature related to this research, the following chapter will explain the methodological processes and strategies that were utilised during the field research period.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Jaffna District has recently emerged from three decades of prolonged violence and isolation, leading to a diverse array of political, social and economic issues. The goal of this research has been to discover to what extent the phenomenon of youth unemployment has become an issue within post-conflict Jaffna District, and how the government, non-governmental organisations, and community actors are working together to solve this problem. The field research for this study was undertaken in the Jaffna District of Sri Lanka's Northern Province from February 18th until March 31st 2015, during which a wide range of data was collected from a variety of relevant sources.

According to Kitchen and Tate (2013: 71), methodology “is a coherent set of rules and procedures which can be used to investigate a phenomenon or situation”. Therefore, the explanation of the methodology provides crucial contextual information about the data that is collected as a result of the field-based research process. While the first chapter explained the wider Sri Lankan context of this research project, and the previous chapter established its theoretical parameters through a critical review of the pertinent literature, this chapter will discuss in detail what was involved in the research process, and how it facilitated the key objectives of the research.

First, this chapter will describe the initial development of an academic literature base which provided the theoretical foundation for the subsequent field research, including how specific key informants and sources of information were identified for the upcoming fieldwork. Secondly, the chapter will explain the formulation of the three research questions that guided the field research process; how these questions were created, and what data was expected to be discovered as a result. The chapter will then outline the methodological process that was undertaken in Jaffna District in order to obtain the research data. By discussing the various qualitative and quantitative methods utilised during the data collection process, this chapter will explain how each approach was selected, and how it was implemented to ensure a wide range of facts, figures and perspectives were discovered. Each research method sought to answer specific aspects of each research question, while a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques were employed in order to gain as far-reaching an appraisal of the youth employment situation in the Jaffna District as was possible in the limited time allowed for data collection. Following this, the University of Otago's ethical research application process will be discussed,

including the importance of this process in ensuring that the researcher is aware of their responsibilities in the safekeeping of informants' privacy and wellbeing during the research process. Next, the chapter will give an explanation of the issue of positionality, a key concept in social science research, which determines the relationships that occur in any research process. The chapter will conclude with highlighting the data analysis process that occurred following the field research, and how the acquired data was interpreted.

Table 3: Summary of research methods

Sources of data collected during research process		
Method	Informants	Frequency
Formal Interviews	NGO branch directors, local government officials, civil society project workers	31
Informal Interviews	University of Jaffna academics, local business owners	11
Questionnaires	Jaffna District Youth	100
Focus Groups	College of Technology & University of Jaffna junior lecturers, Vatharawattai youth,	3

Source: Author's Field research (2015)

4.2 Research strategy

In order to fully explore all aspects and nuances of the research topic, the data collection process was preceded by identifying and investigating various sources which related to youth, youth unemployment, the history of Sri Lanka, and post-conflict development. This process involved a detailed literature review, among both 'grey' literature and peer-reviewed academic works, which provided the theoretical framework for the subsequent research. This research strategy will explain the discovery process initiated during the literature, as well as defining the project's geographical and social parameters, the choice of methodological approaches, the key informant selection procedure, and the use of a translator while conducting fieldwork.

a. Literature Review

In order to gain the necessary contextual and theoretical grounding in Sri Lankan and broader post-conflict development research, a comprehensive search of literature sources was first conducted. Sri Lanka has a diverse and multifaceted history which required in-depth investigation and contemplation, while the highly contested field of post-conflict development is home to a variety of theories and perspectives which similarly required examination. Youth employment is an area which has recently received large amounts of academic exposure, with

varying trains of thought on its significance and potential benefits in the developing world (Izzi, 2013). The secondary sources that were examined helped to identify the gaps within current academic understanding of post-conflict youth employment, and illuminate potential avenues of future research. Webster and Watson (2002: 13) emphasise the importance of conducting a literature review, stating that understanding secondary data “facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed”. The majority of literature uncovered in reference to post-conflict development referred to conflicts in Africa, while most youth employment research that had been conducted in Sri Lanka had not yet addressed the Northern Province, due to the recent conclusion of the country’s 27 years of civil war. This review of secondary data, therefore, demonstrated the focus areas of this research, leading to the creation of specific research questions that would refine and guide the data collection and analysis process.

b. ‘Grey’ Literature

Both prior to leaving, and also in the field while conducting research, a variety of articles and reports became available from a plethora of contacts, key informants, non-government organisations and government departments. These generally unpublished documents, defined by researchers as ‘grey literature’, can provide further insight into the case study region, provide statistical data about the local communities, and can prove useful in addressing specific areas within the research topic (Hart, 1998). While Seymour (2010) recognises that grey literature can often lack the validity and authenticity of peer-reviewed research, he also states its usefulness in providing researchers with an opportunity to immerse themselves in the fieldwork, and in establishing relationships with important local figures. Several key pieces of grey literature were collected during the fieldwork process in Jaffna District, including; National Apprentice and Industrial Training programmes (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2010), Jaffna District Action Plan (Jaffna District Secretariat, 2015), Nallur Division Employment Statistics (Nallur Division, 2014), University College of Jaffna and College of Technology prospectuses, and local newspaper articles concerning employment and post-conflict development. These documents, along with others collected, revealed useful research material that had not been possible to access during the literature review, and provided increased scope and depth to the research process. The discovery of this grey literature would have been unlikely prior to the field research process, and its collection, coupled with the information garnered from the secondary data literature review, enabled a more in-depth understanding and interpretation of the data secured during field-based research in Jaffna District.

c. Defining Research Parameters

i. Jaffna District

Jaffna District is one of Sri Lanka's 25 administrative districts, and one of five within the Northern Province (see Figure.7) (Sri Lankan Government: Department of Census & Statistics, 2012). The district's capital and namesake, Jaffna, is Sri Lanka's twelfth most populous city and the former seat of the medieval Jaffna Kingdom. Prior to the civil war, Jaffna was the country's second largest city and home to vibrant industries and communities. However, following extensive damage during the 1980s, decades of isolation, and the mass exodus of a large proportion of its population, Jaffna city is now a shadow of its former size and significance (UNDP Sri Lanka, 2014). Historically, the capital of Sri Lanka's Tamil population, Jaffna experienced successive occupation by the Portuguese, Dutch and British during colonial times and by the LTTE, Indian Peace Keeping Force, and Sri Lankan Army during the civil war. The significant ethnic majority of Jaffna District is Sri Lankan Tamil, who are predominantly Hindu, with Christians and Muslims making up the religious minorities (see Table.4).

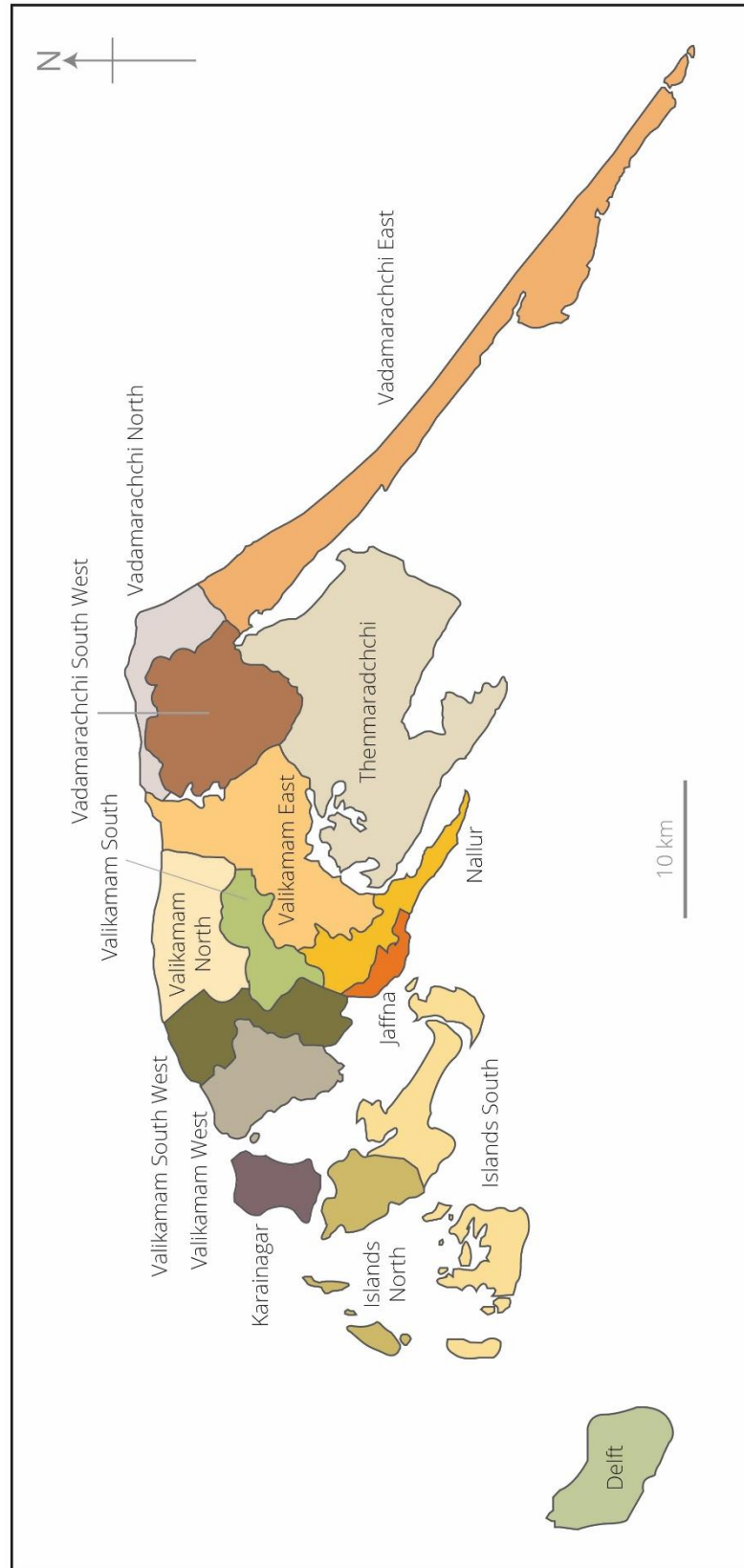
Jaffna District was chosen as the location for this research due its ongoing issues with youth unemployment, which have occurred both as a result of historic and contemporary social, political and economic issues, and have been exacerbated by decades of civil war. The District's current post-conflict development process is ongoing, and while many aspects of the region's political and economic well-being have improved since the cessation of violence in 2009, problems such as youth unemployment still remain a significant issue.

Table 4: Population of Jaffna District by ethnic group, 2012

Ethnic Group	Sri Lankan Tamil	Sinhalese	Indian Tamil	Sri Lanka Moor	Burgher	Malay	Other	Total
Total number of persons	577,246	3,366	499	2,139	9	6	30	583,378
Percentage of population	98.8	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	100

Source: Sri Lanka Census of Population and Housing (2012)

Figure 7: Jaffna District's Administrative Divisions



Source: Adapted from http://www.districtsecretariat.com/images/Jaffna_Map.jpg,
(access date: August 27th, 2015)

The Northern Province's large ethnic imbalance, which was a key factor in fuelling the decades of conflict, is clearly demonstrated within the Jaffna District (see Table 4). A former hub of manufacturing industry and educational excellence, citizens of Jaffna District have become increasingly reliant on primary industries such as fishing and agriculture for their livelihoods since the beginning of conflict in the 1980s, leading to a sustained 'brain drain', as many of the District's most intelligent individuals have emigrated to Europe and North America. Jaffna District's youth unemployment rate is unknown, but it is expected to be far higher than that of the national rate of 18.6 percent, demonstrating the timely relevance of this research (Sri Lankan Government: Department of Census & Statistics, 2014). It would be foolish to assume from these statistics that young people in the Jaffna District are more 'lazy' or 'unemployable' than those of their southern counterparts, therefore there must be exacerbating circumstances that require careful exploration. By focusing solely on Jaffna District, this research is able to gain a deeper appreciation of this area's post-conflict development process, and its associated youth unemployment issues, and how best to devise strategies that assist young people in gaining fulfilling and sustainable employment opportunities within this unique environment.

ii. Youth

Due to the variety of definitions used by different countries and intergovernmental organisations, defining what constitutes 'youth' was an important decision in this research process. The United Nations General Assembly defines 'youth' as ages 15 to 24, however, this is viewed, particularly in the developing world, as a far too restrictive classification, with many cultures viewing young people as 'youth' up to and including their early thirties. The African Youth Charter of 2006, for example, reflects this dichotomy by defining 'youth' in far more expansive terms, ages 15 to 35. Skelton (2002) states that youth is seen as a transitory stage in a person's development, where they mature and develop into independent adults, and the beginning and end of this progression is entirely subjective to the situation in which it occurs. The actions which are traditionally associated with this process, such as leaving home, gaining employment, getting married and having children, may occur simultaneously or sporadically, very quickly or not at all, depending on the situation and culture in which the young person resides (Johnson-Hanks, 2002). According to Johnson-Hanks (2002), this is particularly evident in some countries in the developing world where young people routinely pass back and forward through the classification of youth and adulthood depending on specific decisions they make, and the positive or negative consequences of these choices. Youth is clearly more than a simple age bracket, with varying disciplines and traditions having their own methodologies and theories on how best to conceptualise this period of personal development. Therefore, the

definition of youth within a study must align with the idea of youth in the case study community, such as with Hajdu *et al.* (2013) in Malawi and Lesotho, and Doh *et al.* (2013) in Ghana. For this piece of research ‘youth’ shall be defined as those *between the ages of 15 and 30*, due to this being the age range used in reference to youth by the Sri Lankan Government’s Ministry of Youth Affairs, and the Department of Census and Statistics (Sri Lankan Government: Department of Census & Statistics, 2014).

Youth unemployment can also be debated and measured in a variety of ways, including; in relation to the total unemployment rate, as a percentage of the youth population, as a percentage of the youth labour force, and in relation to the adult unemployment rate. Due to the informal nature of most employment in Jaffna District, exact statistics for youth unemployment are difficult to obtain. However, with a combination of the data gathered by the Jaffna District Secretariat, and the surveys conducted during the field research process, some data analysis can be performed to demonstrate potential trends.

d. Research Approach

Currently there is no definitive or all-inclusive methodology used for both the creation and evaluation of post-conflict youth employment strategies (Izzi, 2013). This is primarily due to the cross-disciplinary nature of the topic, with geography, sociology, peace and conflict studies, anthropology, and economics all investigating such situations through their own theoretical lenses. For research conducted within a post-conflict setting, the “less than optimal conditions mean...there are many cases in such research in which one cannot fully uphold rigid principles of scientific research” (Cohen & Arieli, 2011: 423). However, this does not mean that the research should be discounted simply due to the inability of the methods to adhere to the common principles of being systematic and reproducible, particularly in such a unique and dynamic situation as a post-conflict region (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Research in a post-conflict environment involves several methodological challenges, such as identifying research participants, gaining a subjective view of the conflict, understanding the interests and concerns of the local population, and assessing the quantity and quality of information required (Fujii, 2010). Such challenges are difficult to foresee, and until the researcher actually goes into the field it is difficult for them to envisage their approach to people who have just experienced violent conflict, particularly due to the researcher typically finding “lack of contact information (e.g. whom to interview), a lack of system information (e.g. organizational ignorance), cultural differences (e.g. language barriers), legal, political, and ideological constraints (e.g. contact with foreigners), technical accessibility (e.g. mobility limitations), and, most important, an

atmosphere of fear and distrust” (Cohen & Arieli, 2011: 426). Therefore, the creation of an adaptable approach to field research is a key component to any field-based research in a post-conflict environment.

The primary methodology of this research involved a qualitative approach. However, that is not to say that quantitative elements of data collection were not utilised, or, as explained by Bradshaw and Stratford (2000), these methodological approaches need not be mutually exclusive. A mixture of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies allows for greater depth of analysis and a better understanding of more facets within the study area. The overall goal of this research is to identify the best strategies to provide greatest number of young people in post-conflict Jaffna District with fulfilling and sustainable employment, and the research methods which best assist in this process will be utilised regardless of their methodological affiliation.

This field research, conducted in Jaffna District during March and April of 2015, included a combination of semi-structured interviews with key informants, focus groups, questionnaires and direct observations. During the data collection process, ‘participatory methodologies’ were utilised, so as to best understand the local capacities, knowledge and concepts which shape the youth employment situation within Sri Lanka’s post-conflict context. ‘Participatory Development’ is the process that seeks to address the uneven power dynamics that often occur within a research setting, and allows researchers to become ‘facilitators’ of discussion, rather than academics conducting interrogations (Cornwall, 2006). Participation emerged as a key concept for developmental research in the 1980s, as an alternative approach to the previously quantitative and ‘top-down’ approaches (Chambers, 1989). Championed by researchers such as Robert Chambers; who believed the acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge, local opinions, and alternative ideals was a cornerstone for the empowerment of traditionally excluded populations, participatory methods have increasingly become accepted by researchers. Engaging in local events within the Jaffna community, such as sporting and academic events at the University of Jaffna, partaking in meals at key informants’ residences, and attending local cultural events at temples, art galleries, and schools, provided the researcher with an opportunity to gain a greater appreciation of the local society, and their concerns and hopes for the future.

A snowball sampling methodology (SSM) was also utilised in expanding the list of (predetermined) key informant interviewees during the field research process. According to Cohen & Arieli (2011: 426), SSM is a “distinct method of convenience sampling which has

been proven to be especially useful in conducting research in marginalised societies”, due to its use as a “link...between the initial sample and others in the sample target population”. Due to the previously stated lack of contact with large numbers of potential interviewees prior to arrival in the Jaffna District, SSM provided the best opportunity to grow the list of potential respondents and the amount of data collected. SSM can be used in both qualitative and quantitative research, with it being used to access more potential interviewees, and discover greater numbers of participants for surveys (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). Both of these facets of SSM were utilised during the fieldwork process in Jaffna. As stated by Shurmer-Smith (2001: 96), “when one adopts a particular theoretical position some methods will suggest themselves and others become inappropriate”. As a result, this qualitative, quantitative, participatory, and snowball-sampling methodological approach proved to be the most suited to field-based research in the testing conditions of a post-conflict environment.

e. Key Informants

Through identifying potential research participants prior to undertaking of field research, and subsequent SSM in the Jaffna District, 42 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Semi-structured interviews occur when the interviewer has an outline of potential interview questions, but is able to vary both the sequence of questions and the number of questions asked depending on each individual interviewee (Ritchie, 2013). According to Ritchie (2013), this allows for flexibility within the interview context, typically allowing the researcher to pursue more in-depth questioning in areas where the interviewee has particularly valuable knowledge or strong opinions. This semi-structured style of interviewing was recognised as being the most suited to research in a post-conflict situation, allowing the interviewee to direct the majority of the conversation, and the interviewer to move away from potentially emotive or distressing questions if the interviewee is showing concern.

The process of participant selection can often lead to various biases entering the research, mainly due to failure of researchers to obtain a diverse range of experiences across gender, age, ethnicity, religion and class. People of different ages perceive and experience employment in differing ways, with the expectations of what is traditionally associated with employment being heavily biased toward those in older generations in positions of power and policy making (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). As a result, particular efforts were made during the participant selection process to not only engage with those who created policy surrounding youth employment in the Jaffna District, but also with those who worked directly with youth in such programmes and education institutions, and with young people themselves. Due to the

history of youth marginalisation and exclusion in the region, it was important for this research process to engage the citizens of the Jaffna District in a cooperative manner, and the interviewing process be carried out in a way that facilitates an appropriate tone for the diverse array of informants (Webber & Ison, 1995). This inclusive style of participant selection led to a greater understanding of multiple perspectives within Jaffna District on the subject of youth employment and its role in the development of the region.

f. Use of a translator

Due to Tamil being the dominant ethnicity of the Jaffna District, the vast majority of the population use the Tamil language as their primary source of communication. While many public signs and services use Sinhalese and English as extra mediums of communication, the majority of daily interactions occur in Tamil. Sri Lanka is a tri-lingual nation; however, the linguistic difference between the historically warring Sinhalese and Tamil ethnicities has often been a source of further separation between the groups. English, the language often associated with the wealthy and privileged in Sri Lankan society, is not only seen as a mark of socio-economic status, but is increasingly being viewed as a ‘bridging language’ for reconciliation between Tamil and Sinhalese in the post-conflict regions. English is also Sri Lanka’s academic and technical language, with all faculties, apart from the Arts faculties, at the country’s universities using English as the teaching medium. This is viewed as an important tool in giving Sri Lankan graduates the best opportunity to thrive in an increasingly globalised world. For those outside the tertiary education system, English courses of varying quality and quantity are offered in Jaffna District, leading to a growing competency in the English language throughout the population.

As a result of the growth in English usage in the Jaffna district, the necessity of using a translator in this research was far less than had been expected. All of the higher education/vocational training providers, local government officials, non-government organisations, and local community organisers/leaders who were interviewed spoke English. The only situations which required a translator, were the focus group and surveys of local youth, for which I gained translation assistance from a University of Jaffna junior Geography lecturer, who was able to provide detailed translation. Due to the major differences between Tamil and English, it was impossible from me to discern the content of the conversation between the translator and the youth. However, due to the translator’s background in social research within his own university Geography department, he was able to assure me of his translational accuracy, and that he attempted to gain the most accurate and authentic responses from respondents.

4.3 Research questions

In order to clearly focus and direct the research into youth unemployment in the post-conflict Jaffna District setting, three research questions were formulated during the literature review process. These questions helped to shape the research process and the methods used to obtain the necessary data:

1. What is the extent of the ‘youth’ unemployment issue in the post-conflict Jaffna District?

This question is wide-reaching by design, allowing the researcher to investigate the extent of youth unemployment through a number of sources, both primary and secondary.

2. How is the issue of ‘youth’ unemployment in the post-conflict Jaffna District being addressed?

A key aspect to this research is understanding the level to which the youth employment problems in Jaffna District is viewed, and what attempts are being made to address them. Are these strategies being carried out by government, NGOs, or by local community groups, or is it a combination of all three groups?

3. What are the key factors affecting the future of ‘youth’ engagement and employment in the Jaffna District?

This final research question addresses the important issues associated with the future of youth participation in growth and development in the Jaffna District. What factors are encouraging or preventing young people from becoming involved in the community and working to drive the post-conflict development process in the community? Can the successful engagement of youth in the community be a force for sustained peace and prosperity in a region that has struggled in both respects in recent decades?

4.4 Research methodology

As previously stated, this research process utilised a methodology that was qualitative, quantitative and participatory, while employing both snowball-sampling and purposive approaches, as this combination was seen as being most suited to field research in the testing conditions of a post-conflict environment. The following data collection techniques that were employed all rely on the ability of the researcher to facilitate meaningful discussion that elicits information from the participants.

a. Key Informant Interviews

For each interview the same procedure was followed in order to obtain data that could be compared in a holistic manner, and to create methodology that was systematic and repeatable:

- Arriving at a pre-determined time for interview with recording device (Dictaphone) and writing materials for note taking.
- Engaging in general greetings and ice-breaking conversation so as to make participants comfortable. Request permission to record the interview for later transcription, and inform the interviewees that their identity would remain anonymous throughout the study and that they may withdraw from the research at any time.
- Explaining the context of the study, its goals, intentions, and the interviewee's position within it.
- Proceeding with questioning in a coherent and logical order, while recognising when the participant wishes to talk more or less about a particular topic. Allow the conversation to flow rather than stopping and starting, so as to ensure the participant was both comfortable and engaged.
- Taking notes concerning key body language movements or tone changes to help understand the participant's responses, particularly when reviewing the interview at a later date.
- Building up to more sensitive and/or controversial questions. Only persist with this sort of questioning if the participant seems willing to continue.
- Making sure that the interview does not run for too long and impinge on the participant's time. Interviews should not run for longer than 45 minutes.
- Concluding the interview by asking if there is anything that the participant wants to add. Thank them for their participation, and ensure that they can contact you again if they wish.

By following this check-list for each of the interviews a large amount of informative data was acquired from these different groups of key informant participants. The 42 interviewees can be categorised into four different groups, each of which was undertaking key roles with regard to youth employment and engagement in Jaffna District. They are as follows:

i. Tertiary Education/Vocational Training providers

A key source of information surrounding the educational and employment aspiration of youth in the Jaffna District, were the region's tertiary and vocational education institutions. Higher education providers, such as the University of Jaffna, the Advanced Technology Institute, University College Jaffna, and the College of Technology, offer young people an opportunity to gain further knowledge and skills which will potentially make them more

employable. Both qualitative and quantitative data was available to be collected from these institutions, with participants providing both enrolment figures and anecdotes related to youth within Jaffna District.

ii. Local Government officials

A number of local government agencies and departments within the Jaffna District were identified as interview priorities prior to undertaking field research. The interviewees from these bodies, such as Jaffna District Secretariat and Nallur Divisional Office, provided the majority of employment statistics and governmental perspectives on issues associated with young people in the region. The government officials who were interviewed supplied a key policy-making perspective, and provided essential data on the amount of youth who were seeking employment, as well as the number of organisations and programmes operating in the District primarily for the benefit of young people.

iii. International non-government organisations

Many international NGOs have been present in Jaffna District for several decades. As well as providing post-conflict development assistance and tsunami aid, many have programmes specifically dedicated to the engagement and employment of youth. Aid workers at organisations such as Red Cross International, World Vision, PARCIC and Swiss Development Co-operation, were able to provide information on the issues associated with young people and the post-conflict development process in the region from external perspectives.

iv. Local community organisers/leaders

Several civil society groups within Jaffna District have taken special interest in working with youth, recognising the importance of engaging the next generation in the growth and development of the region. Groups such as Jaffna Social Action Centre and the Centre for Policy Alternative have become increasingly involved in youth issues since the cessation of violence in 2009, leading to them being excellent sources of qualitative data for this research.

b. Focus Groups

Three focus groups were used during the field research process; with a group of twelve young men from the village of Vatharawatti, with five junior lecturers at the University of Jaffna, and with lecturers at Jaffna's vocational training College of Technology (see Fig.8). Focus groups are small numbers of people brought together by the researcher to discuss a particular issue that is likely to induce a more informative debate if the participants are able to have a discussion with one and other (Bloor, 2001). Researchers believe that if focus groups

are implemented correctly, the comforting presence of others during the interviewing process allows participants to discuss and engage with issues related to the research topic in greater depth and with increased assuredness (Kitzinger, 1994). The first focus group was carried out in the small village of Vatharawatti with young men aged 16 to 28, some of whom held full-time jobs, others seasonal informal employment, and several who were currently unemployed. Due to some participants lacking English competency, a junior lecturer from the University of Jaffna accompanied me as translator. The discussion yielded interesting data concerning the seasonal nature of unemployment in Jaffna District, the issues facing rural young people attempting to access higher education, and the participants' experiences during the three decades of conflict. The following two focus groups were undertaken with lecturers from two of Jaffna District's higher education facilities, the University of Jaffna and the College of Technology. A clear example of the purposeful sampling method was ensuring that staff members were from different departments of their institutions, were both male and female, and were of varying ages. These two focus groups concentrated on issues surrounding education in the area, the societal expectations of young Tamil people, and the skills that graduates needed to acquire if they hoped to gain employment upon finishing their formal education. Overall, the use of this dynamic and informative research tool provided excellent data during the fieldwork process, and demonstrated the importance of using multiple research methods to elicit unique information from various sources (Kitzinger, 1994).

Figure 8: Focus Group in the village of Vatharawatti, Jaffna District



Source: Author's field research (2015)

c. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were utilised during the field research process to provide primary quantitative data. The process of questionnairing involved the purposeful selection of 100 youth citizens at 3 locations within Jaffna City (University of Jaffna, College of Technology & Hospital Road Market), and the asking of questions concerning their education and employment history, their access to training and career advice, and their goals for future employment. According to Kitchin and Tate (2013), the questionnairing process provides the quantitative aspect of a social research project by showing a representative illustration of opinions and behaviour within the focus area. The questionnaires were designed to elicit the greatest amount of information in the most rapid and convenient method possible. Each questionnaire contained ten straightforward questions, and progressed from the most basic questions to those which required more thought from the participant. The short nature of each question meant that during the few occasions where translation was needed, the most faithful translation of the participant was obtained.

Figure 9: Locations of questionnaire sampling, Jaffna District



Source: Adapted from www.maps-streetview.com/Sri-Lanka/Jaffna/roadmap.php.
(access date: May 10th, 2015)

d. Observations

The use of qualitative observation methods provided another key opportunity to gather data during the field research. The observation data method involves the development of the researcher's understanding of the research focus area, both during and outside of the formalised data collection methods (Hay, 2000). Due to the post-conflict nature of this research, the observation method was utilised to allow the gathering of contextualising and complementary information about the current status of the post-conflict development process, while simultaneously engaging in the interviewing, focus group and questionnairing processes. The observation method was utilised during the initial exploration of Jaffna District, and the subsequent interaction with local people, public transport facilities, various marketplaces, and small communities outside of Jaffna city. While it is important to recognise the inability of the researcher to gain a true understanding of the experiences of Jaffna District citizens during the civil war through the short field research period, gaining some degree of empathy for the massive trauma the community suffered is important. Through the exploration and interaction with the local community, key observations were able to be made concerning the relationship between young people, the wider community, and the post-conflict development of the region.

4.5 Ethics

Adhering to ethical standards of social science research methodology was a key consideration in the data collection process, both prior to, and during fieldwork in Jaffna District. The criteria for the protection and privacy of all research participants, as outlined by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee, was followed in its entirety, while key ethical issues that might potentially arise during post-conflict qualitative research methodologies were recognised and taken into account throughout the entire research process.

The University of Otago Human Ethics Committee required the submission of an 'Ethics A' application prior to the beginning of this research project (Appendix 1), due to it being conducted overseas, with a potentially vulnerable community who could be at risk of exploitation, and in a region where the researcher's safety and well-being were possibly at risk. The application briefly outlined the topic of research, methodologies, ethical research practices required (i.e. Compliance with *The Privacy Act 1993*, and the *Health Information Privacy Code 1994*), Health & Safety aspects, potential travel risks, and contingences in case of any unseen developments. Participant information sheets and consent forms were included in the ethics application, as well as copies of potential questionnaires and methods of data storage, so as to demonstrate the ethical nature of the potential research. In addition to the ethics application, the University of Otago Geography Department Health and Safety Committee required the

submission of a Health and Safety plan (Appendix 4). This document identified potential hazards during the fieldwork process and outlined strategies for coping with various emergency situations that could occur. Travel insurance, appropriate medical requirements (such as Tetanus, Malaria and Hepatitis vaccinations), and awareness of ongoing travel risk levels, were all routine considerations that were also completed in the lead up to the field-based research.

In order to mitigate potential ethical issues during research following a social and qualitative approach, the consensus among academics is that the protection of research participants is of utmost importance (Homan, 1991). The protection of human dignity is defined as being a key consideration of any socially conscious research, with the participants being fully aware of what their involvement entails, participant cognisance of their ability to remove themselves from the research at any moment, and the participants maintaining anonymity throughout the study, all being viewed as crucial aspects of keeping to ethical standards (Sidaway, 1992; Homan, 1991). These ethical concerns are particularly valid within post-conflict research, with the typically vulnerable nature of the communities in which the research is taking place being at the forefront any methodological considerations (Webel & Johansen, 2012). By being honest and transparent about the goals of this research project, and my potential biases as the researcher, the data collection process was able to occur with the participants being fully aware of how the information they were imparting would be used. Recent research has also suggested that reporting back to participants throughout the data analysis processes can be used to further alleviate potential ethical concerns, and also engage with the participants so that they feel their time and input into the research was worthwhile, particularly if results that may benefit the post-conflict development process are discovered (Purdam, 2014; Wesche et al, 2010). Overall, every effort was made throughout the research process to ensure that the study adhered to all the ethical standards of post-conflict and qualitative research (see Appendix 10.1 for University of Otago Human Ethics Committee application and approval).

4.6 Positionality

Positionality is recognised as an increasingly important concept within theoretical approaches in social science, its growth in relevance coinciding with the emergence of modern post-structuralist styles of social research (Wesche *et al*, 2010). While researchers such as Cornwall and Chambers have long campaigned for the inclusion of a sense of positionality in research, particularly due to the historic disregard for biases that Chambers believes has tainted the early years of development research (Chambers, 1983), only recently has positionality come

to the forefront of the research process. A key aspect of any research project is objectivity, particularly when undertaking research in a location far removed from the researcher's nation of birth and education. The researcher's positionality may create a 'power imbalance' with the participant, leading to potential harm or mistreatment of the informants either during or after the research. While the researcher may not intend any harm (Chambers, 1983), the positionality imbalance created by race, ethnicity, gender, wealth, education, sense of authority, etc., may lead to a significant disparity between the researcher and the participants. Therefore, it is essential that the participatory nature of any methodologies used is undertaken in an atmosphere that is comfortable and culturally sensitive to the local communities, in the hope of obtaining unguarded responses. Empathy and understanding are hallmarks of successful data collection processes, and must be taken into account at the commencement of any such research project (Cornwell, 2006). As a young, relatively educated foreigner undertaking research in a historically underdeveloped and isolated community, it was inevitable that my presence would not go unnoticed by members of Jaffna District with whom I came into contact. As well as my inability to comprehend the horrors which many of the participants had experienced during the 27 years of civil war, the racial, religious and cultural components of my positionality differed starkly from those within Jaffna District. During my time in Sri Lanka, I encountered a large variety of ethnicities, religions and cultures, all of which were 'foreign' to me, as a white, Catholic New Zealander. Particularly within Jaffna District, I was also witness to inequality and poverty on a scale that I had never been exposed to before, which inadvertently would have impacted on the way I worked with participants, how they cooperated with me, and the overall nature of the data collected.

4.7 Data Analysis

As a result of the mixture of data collection processes utilised in the field, both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained (Creswell, Plano Clark & Garrett, 2008). The recording, safekeeping, and transporting of this information back from Sri Lanka was carried out with the upmost of care. Due to the use of an interview schedule with predetermined questions for both key informant interviews and focus groups, comparisons in answers across data collection events were able to be drawn, leading to the emergence of broad themes. To begin the data analysis process, the key informant interviews and focus group summaries were transcribed, utilising the notes and recordings taken during the interview process. Following this, some relevant quotes were organised under those themes identified during the literature review and the interview process, allowing for a coherent flow of ideas during the writing process. The

results of questionnaires were processed in Excel spread-sheets and then turned into the graphs that are employed later in this report. Overall, this data analysis process was undertaken with an emphasis on accuracy and objectivity, due to its overall importance in the final makeup of the research findings.

4.8 Conclusion

The main goal of this chapter has been to outline the methodological steps and research parameters that were established in order to create a piece of research that complied with the standards of ethical fieldwork within a post-conflict research situation. The chapter has discussed the development of a theoretical base through a literature review, followed by the explanation of a research strategy and the creation of three main research questions. Next the research methodology was explained in detail, with each method explicitly described and the key aspects of ethical research and the researcher's positionality were also considered. The goal of the field research process in Jaffna District was to elicit large quantities of information concerning the place of youth unemployment within the post-conflict development of the region. Through the use of this methodology, the aforementioned goal was able to be achieved, while the resulting study has been able to further contribute to the field of research on youth unemployment within a post-conflict development setting. The ethical framework laid out by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee also allowed for the protection of the interests and well-being of the Jaffna District communities to remain uppermost throughout the research process. Overall, the qualitative, quantitative and participatory methodology, that employed both snowball sampling and purposive sampling approaches, provided the best parameters for the testing conditions of a post-conflict environment.

With the methodological framework of this research process explained, the presentation and discussion of the data obtained during the field research can now occur, beginning with an explanation of the current extent of youth unemployment issues within Jaffna District. A former powerful and thriving region of Sri Lanka, Jaffna District is now characterised by some of the nation's highest unemployment among young people, and faces a difficult challenge in achieving a successful post-conflict reconstruction and development process.

5. The Current Situation

Youth unemployment in Jaffna District

5.1. Introduction

As previously stated in the Literature Review (see Chapter 3), policy makers in the developing world have become increasingly aware that high levels of youth employment in a nation are a clear indicator of a healthy economy and a generally well-off society (Gough, Langevang & Owus, 2013). This awareness has coincided with the international peacebuilding community beginning to show interest in youth as a ‘force for peace’ in post-conflict regions, rather than the traditional view of them as a ‘threat to peace’ (Izzi, 2013). The engagement of young people in meaningful employment is increasingly viewed as a vital peacebuilding and post-conflict strategy, especially in drawn-out conflicts where multiple generations of youth have played key roles in the conflict as child soldiers or key combatants (Thangarajah, 2002). “Historically, unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, has been chronic in Sri Lanka” (Hettige & Salih, 2010: 248), a problem which was exacerbated by a destructive and divisive 27 years of ethnic conflict. Jaffna District, an administrative area within Sri Lanka’s Northern Province, is one such region of post-conflict, which is currently experiencing significant youth unemployment, an issue that has been exacerbated by factors associated with decades of violence since the 1970s. A former hub of manufacturing industry and educational excellence, Jaffna District has experienced a period of sustained conflict that, in conjunction with several other economic, cultural and political factors, has led to the region’s youth unemployment issues.

This first chapter of results and discussion directly addresses the issues raised in Research Question number one (see Methods Chapter), providing primary and secondary data which outline the significance of youth unemployment within Jaffna District. The post-war legacies affecting Jaffna District’s development process, the current extent of youth unemployment in the region, the ‘structural’ nature of the region’s youth unemployment, and the influence of remittances from the Tamil diaspora, are all investigated in detail. Current government statistics, key informant responses and relevant pieces of grey literature will be utilised to provide an all-inclusive evaluation of the employment problem facing young people within Jaffna District.

5.2. The problem of youth unemployment in a post-conflict setting

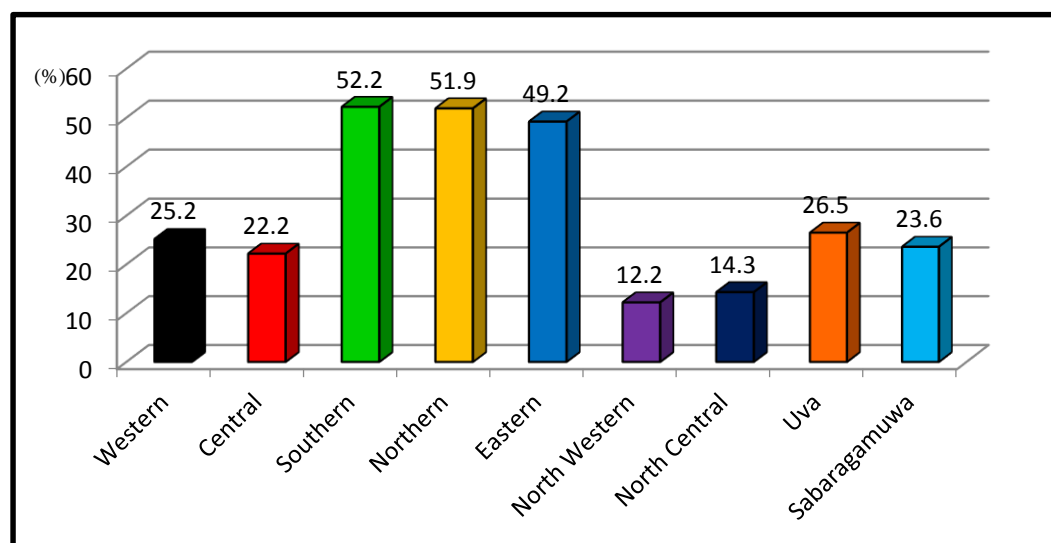
To fully understand the complex nature of Jaffna District's prolonged issues with youth unemployment, one must gain an appreciation of the destructive and divisive extent of Sri Lanka's 27 year civil war, and the nature of the initial post-conflict development process under former President Rajapaksa. As explained previously (see Chapter 2), the nearly three decades of conflict between Tamil separatists and the Sri Lankan government devastated communities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country, due to them being the location of most of the actual warfare, especially in the final phases of the conflict (Harrison, 2012). The years of warfare and isolation experienced in Jaffna District, devastated the area's previously pre-eminent manufacturing and education industries, which by war's end had led to a return to historically important small-scale traditional livelihoods, such as fishing, agriculture and handcrafts (Wijerathna *et al*, 2010). Due to the Sri Lankan government's decisive victory over the separatist LTTE forces in 2009, the task of post-conflict development was undertaken by to the administration of victorious President Mahindra Rajapaksa, a right-wing Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalist whose initial efforts at reconstruction and development in the war-torn regions were characterised by "deliberately undermined reconciliation with the Tamil minority, while simultaneously manipulating a climate of Sinhalese-Buddhist triumphalism to further strengthen the executive's power" (DeVotta, 2013: 1). The Presidential Task Force, which was created to preside over post-conflict reconstruction, controlled all aspects of development in war-torn regions. According to many Key Informants, this government-led post-conflict development process focused predominantly on infrastructure and military-based construction, with the reopening of the A9 highway from Anuradhapura to Jaffna and the creation of several military bases, the main tangible developments in the Northern Province. The completion of this highway, as well as the reopening of the Colombo to Jaffna railway in October 2014, while providing much needed accessibility to the historically isolated Jaffna District, have thus far not provided significant development impetus for the region and have done little to uplift the livelihoods of the majority of the region's poor, nor provided much-needed sustainable employment within communities. In fact, the construction of the Northern Province sector of the Colombo to Jaffna railway did not even utilise local labour or construction businesses, but instead was financed and implemented by banks and government subsidiaries from India (Srinivasan, 2014). The widespread nepotism and neo-liberal development practices of President Rajapaksa immediately following the war, continued to weaken his popularity within the Northern and Eastern Provinces, with the continued confiscation of large portions of arable

land by the Sri Lanka Army, further hampering development of agricultural livelihoods in the region. Key Informant 1 provided an example of the opinion which many Jaffna District citizens have of the former President:

“Rajapaksa did some economic development, you can’t deny that. But it was only roads, rails, and infrastructure. He was arrogant, a dictator, he would not listen. He didn’t care for the ordinary man, especially if he was Tamil”. – Key Informant 1, (24th February, 2015).

This sense of disregard for the humanitarian aspects of President Rajapaksa’s post-conflict development process is exemplified in the refusal of the Presidential Task Force to allow international NGOs to offer trauma counselling for citizens in the Northern and Eastern Provinces (Key Informant 9, 2015). In general, international NGOs experienced extremely tight government restrictions in the war’s immediate aftermath, leading to many scaling down their humanitarian efforts, or even leaving the region altogether (DeVotta, 2013). Overall, the initial post-war development period under Rajapaksa’s Presidential Task Force failed to address the key social, economic and political issues within the war-torn regions of Sri Lanka, leaving areas such as Jaffna District facing serious developmental problems including widespread youth unemployment. The regional variance in youth underemployment in Sri Lanka is represented in the graph below (see Fig. 10), with the regions heavily affected by the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami (Southern & Eastern), and those which suffered from the majority of conflict during the civil war (Northern & Eastern), experiencing by far the greatest issues with youth employment and engagement.

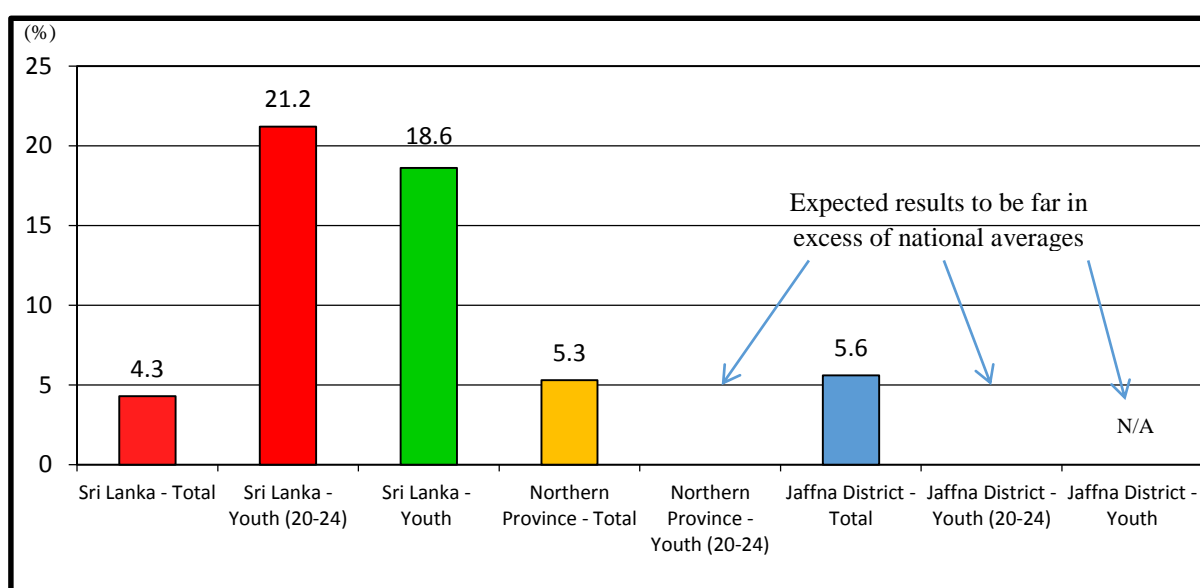
Figure 10: Youth underemployment variance across Sri Lanka’s Provinces, 2013.



Source: National Youth Survey (2013)

The current extent of youth unemployment in the Jaffna District is of great concern in a region that is only just recovering from almost three decades of violent conflict and sustained isolation. The current unemployment statistics, acquired from the National Youth Survey of 2013, the Department of Census & Statistics' quarterly reports, and UNDP Sri Lanka's 2014 Human Development Report, provide a good insight into the scale of the unemployment, and how much it is hindering the development of the region. As of the 4th quarter of 2014, Jaffna District was home to the 3rd highest rate of total unemployment of Sri Lanka's 25 Districts at 5.6 percent (see Fig. 13), and although no figure was available for youth unemployment in Jaffna District (with figures for overall employment in the Northern Province only just being collected for the first time in several decades in 2012), the youth unemployment rate for Jaffna District is expected to be a figure far in excess of the national average of 18.6 percent. This lack of reliable statistical data for unemployment within Jaffna District demonstrates clearly the difficulty in acquiring accurate data in a post-conflict region, where the majority of the employment occurs in the informal sector, with little recording or government oversight.

Figure 11: Percentages for total & youth unemployment in Sri Lanka, 2014.

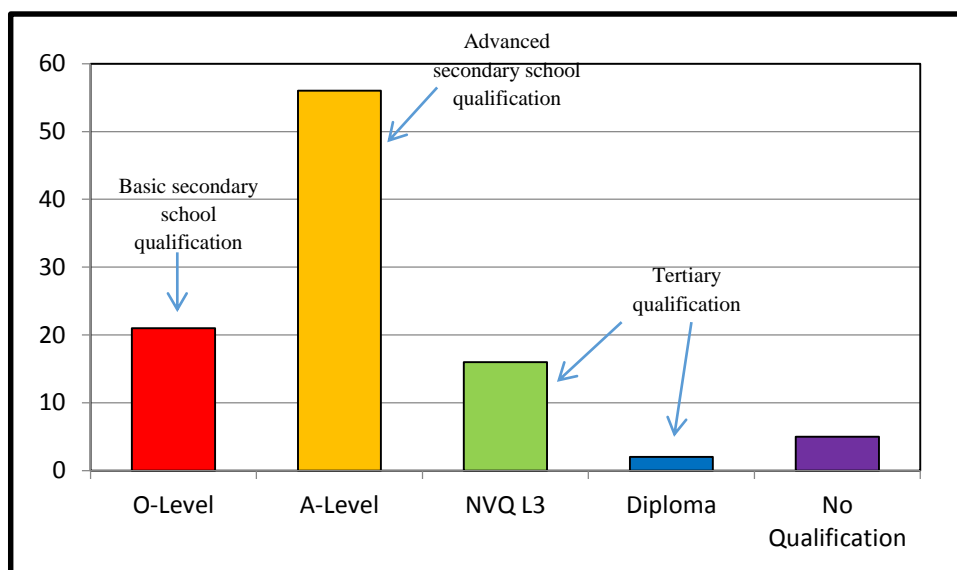


Source: Sri Lankan Government: Department of Census & Statistics (2014) and National Youth Survey (2013)

The post-conflict context, and the structural nature of youth employment in Jaffna District (explained further in this Chapter), have made potential job prospects for young people within the region rather bleak. However, as the graph below (see Fig. 12) demonstrates, due to the importance placed on education within the Tamil community of Jaffna District, although

the majority of respondents had not yet achieved tertiary qualifications¹, over 75 percent had left secondary school with some form of high school educational credentials.

Figure 12: Questionnaire respondents' highest qualification



Source: Author's Field research (2015)

The city of Jaffna has historically been home to most of the significant academic and cultural accomplishments of the Sri Lankan Tamil people, with the University of Jaffna and the Jaffna Public Library being important monuments to their educational achievements (van Horen, 2002). Built in 1933, the Library was famously set fire to by an organised Sinhalese mob in June 1981 in one of the most aggressive acts of ethnic biblioclasm² of the 20th Century (Senaratne, 1997). The Library, which at the time was one of the largest in Asia, and a significant symbol of Tamil education achievement, lost over 97,000 volumes of culturally significant books and irreplaceable manuscripts (Senaratne, 1997). The historical legacy of Tamil academic success has not been forgotten within Jaffna District today, with many parents routinely foregoing various goods and services in order to pay for the costs associated with sending their children to school. While education at public schools in Sri Lanka remains free, the transportation, uniform and stationery costs can be a significant burden to low socio-economic families, often leading to students being forced to withdraw from school and return home to assist with the family livelihood:

“Many struggling families keep their children at home to help earn a living. Hopefully creating this additional income means parents can afford to send their children to

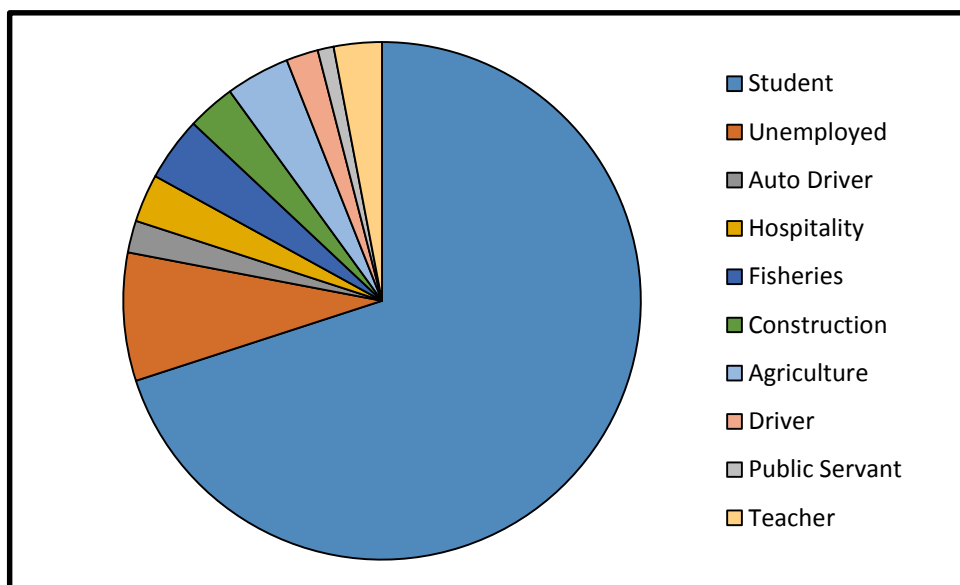
¹ Many of the respondents were currently students undertaking tertiary study, but had yet to complete their degree or vocational training programme.

² Biblioclasm is the ritual destruction of books/written materials usually carried out as censorship or persecution

school. But the majority brought up in agriculture will stay in agriculture". – Key Informant 10, (1st March, 2015).

The deeply engrained standing of education within Jaffna District, coupled with the public education system, means that, where possible, the majority of youth gain an education up to the completion of secondary school. Because of the previously mentioned sacrifices that parents undertake to ensure their children are able to attend school, those young people who have failed to finish high school are typically derided as being "layabouts" or "not progressing" (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). This was clearly evident during the first Focus Group (Focus Group One) which I conducted as part of the field research in Jaffna District; when an 18 year old unemployed man was teased by the other Focus Group participants for leaving school prior to completing his A-Level exams, and then complaining about the difficulty he was experiencing while trying to gain employment in anything other than seasonal agricultural or construction work. While reflective of the significance placed on education by the Tamil culture in the Jaffna District, the graph above (see Fig. 13) is potentially misleading, as many of the students will be unlikely to gain employment in the areas in which they are currently studying due to the structural nature of the region's unemployment, and the cultural constraints that confine some members of society.

Figure 13: Questionnaire respondents' current occupation



Source: Author's Field research (2015)

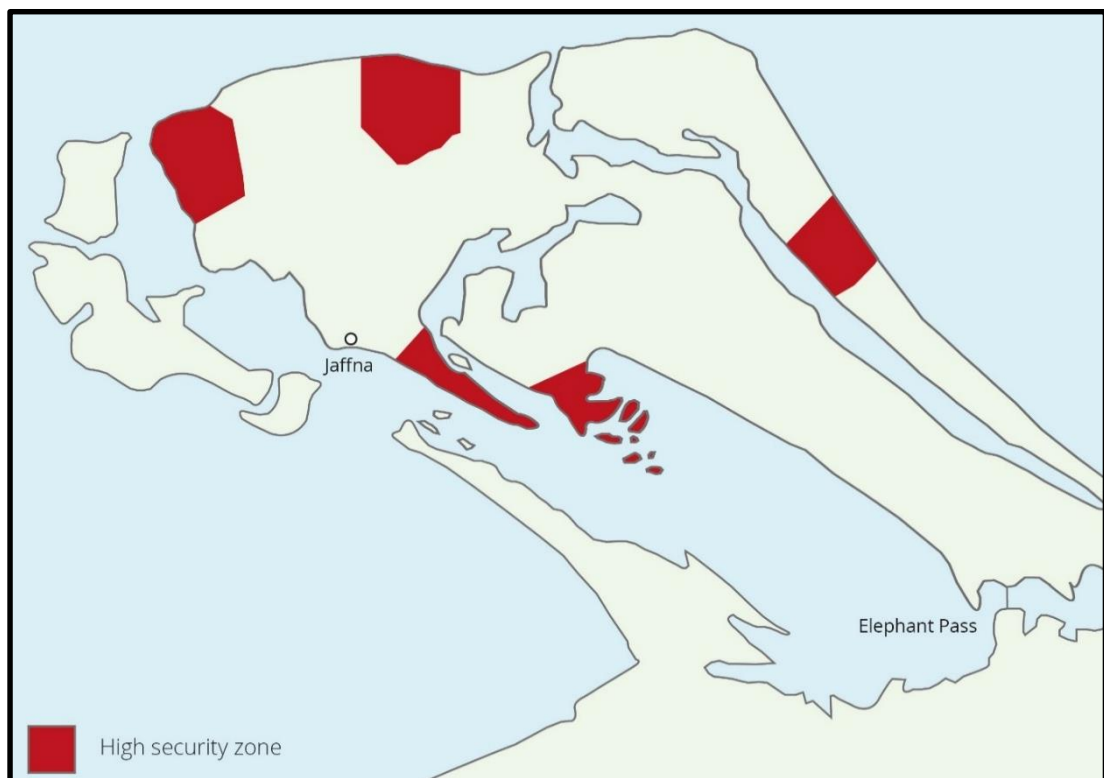
The pressures within Jaffna District's labour market, the effect of the mass emigration from the region, and the flow of remittances back into the community (all of which will be explained in greater depth later in this chapter), further complicate the problems associated with providing higher levels of education to young people who will be unable to gain employment within their field of study if they remain in Jaffna District.

Two uniquely post-conflict factors of the development within Jaffna District have significant negative impacts on the prospect of employment for many of the region's young people: returning Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), and the large areas of 'confiscated land' being held by the Sri Lankan Army since the cessation of violence in 2009 (Uyangoda, 2010). First, due to the length and destructive nature of the Sri Lankan civil war, thousands of people were forced to flee their homes, particularly in the Northern and Eastern Provinces during the climactic battles of the conflict in 2008/09. Recent studies have shed light on those who seek refuge from a conflict, but do not cross international borders, meaning that, although they are refugees they may not obtain protection under the UN's Refugee Convention (Brun, 2003; Hampton, 2013). The Sri Lankan civil war forced the internal displacement of thousands of people, leading to many economic and social issues. In general, the Sri Lankan government largely accepted responsibility for those displaced during the war and provided assistance to the majority, including the creation of 'welfare centres' (IDP Camps) and through the distribution of food rations (Brun, 2003). However, approximately 300,000 IDPs who were in 'un-cleared areas' controlled by the LTTE in 2008, received significantly less assistance during both the conflict and immediately after the war's conclusion. A key dimension that is receiving increased attention among the post-conflict development community is the tension between the resettled IDPs and the local people who live where the IDPs are settled (Brun, 2003; Hampton, 2013). In situations such as the Sri Lankan post-conflict development process, the rate of IDP resettlement and reintegration has been slow, leading to social and economic stagnation for those languishing in transitional camps. Between July and September 2009, while the war was reaching its bloody conclusion in Mullaitivu District, a cross-sectional sample survey was conducted by Husain *et al* (2009) among 1517 households in Jaffna District. One third of the respondents (31.5 percent) were either currently displaced, or had only recently been resettled, and this number is believed to have sharply increased following the cessation of violence in Mullaitivu District, with the Jaffna region was regarded as one of the safest districts within the Northern Province. Three of the IDP camps still exist in Jaffna District, with the availability of land for resettlement and the various problems associated with potential employment and livelihood creation being key obstacles to the disbanding of these temporary residences. The study conducted by Husain *et al* (2009) not only demonstrated the large number of people who are currently displaced, or had only recently been resettled, but also highlighted the prevalence of war-related mental health conditions among the IDP population. Not only do these problems take a significant time to overcome, if ever, but the underlying trauma associated with substantial exposure to conflict and the subsequent displacement status, means the returning IDPs to Jaffna District will likely find it even more difficult to gain employment in the fragile

and competitive post-conflict labour market (Husain *et al*, 2009). Returning IDPs to their old communities, or successfully resettling them in new areas, while an important aspect of any post-conflict development, is a process that places increased pressure on the already fragile post-war labour market (Brun, 2003; Mathur, 2013).

Secondly, the significant military presence that has remained in Jaffna District since the cessation of violence in 2009 is proving to be a substantial hindrance to the re-building of livelihoods and employment opportunities in the region. Large sections of the Jaffna Peninsula were confiscated by the Sri Lankan Army during the final stages of the conflict, with significant areas of arable land and former Tamil settlements having yet to be rehabilitated. While a continued military presence is regarded by most post-conflict development researchers to be an important peacebuilding aspect, typically the military forces are expected to be as small and unobtrusive as possible, and are systematically scaled down as the security of the region becomes ever greater (MacGinty & Williams, 2009). The Sri Lankan Army presence in Jaffna District, however, has undergone no such process, with the Army's 'High Security Zones' of confiscated land equating to 8% (85km² of 1025km²) of the entire Jaffna District, the majority of which is land that was utilised for agriculture or home to several communities prior to the conflict (see Fig. 14) (Unknown Author, 2014).

Figure 14: High Security Zone locations in Jaffna District.



Source: Adapted from www.sundaytime.lk,
(access date: June 6th, 2015)

In a region lacking the substantial natural resources of some of the nation's other districts (arable land, plantations, forestry), the continued confiscation of this land provides a large obstacle to the creation of industries which could drive employment and livelihood generation in the post-conflict development process. The High Security Zones also continues to exacerbate the feelings of distrust between the national government and the people of the Northern Province, resulting in the sustained military occupation becoming an increasingly divisive issue:

“Faith, trust and confidence still need to grow between the government and the people affected during the war. This process would be assisted by the removal of the military from the High Security Zones. The military is for war, and no one is going to come and invade Sri Lanka...” (said in ironic/satirical manner) – Key Informant 20, (16th March, 2015).

According to Key Informant 5 (2015), around 16,000 people remain displaced as a result of the High Security Zones (see Fig. 14), leaving them in an uneasy transitional state, unsure of how long it will be until their lands are returned to them. With their livelihoods already severely disrupted by the year of war, facing further uncertainty and increased inequality as a result of the sustained army occupation. Research has also shown that the military's recent attempts to grow crops and sell them in local markets is causing further problems for Jaffna District farmers, who are unable to match the Sri Lankan Army's scale, and subsequently cheaper prices, causing a loss of key market share. Overall, the continuing presence of large Sri Lankan Army forces in the Northern Province is having considerable negative economic, social and developmental consequences for the region's most vulnerable citizens.

Vignette 1 – Post-conflict vs. Post-war

During the fieldwork portion of this research, a new potential avenue for research was described by several lecturers at the University of Jaffna. While this research occurred under the assumption that Jaffna District was currently experiencing a post-conflict period of development, these lecturers argued that the process was not post-conflict, but post-war. This seemingly irrelevant difference is actually crucially important, as a post-conflict phases implies some form of resolution was struck between the warring parties to allow the conflict to come to a peaceful conclusion, which was most definitely not what occurred to end the Sri Lankan civil war. Instead, the violent close to the nation's prolonged ethnic conflict has left the Tamil population, who are the majority in the Northern and Eastern regions of the country, not only defeated, but marginalised, isolated and increasingly bitter about the post-war development process. Due to the failure of the Sri Lankan Government to implement any reconciliatory programmes or institutions following the war's conclusion, there has been no opportunity for the warring factions to compromise or undertake a peaceful dialogue. As stated by Stone (2014) recently, the 'ethnocratic malgovernance' of the Sri Lankan government under President Rajapaksa in the immediate aftermath of the civil war displayed a complete indifference toward long-held Tamil grievances and, despite the opportunity for genuine reconciliation in 2009, oversaw a process that might have a long-term cost in terms of peace and stability. The Sinhalese leaders of Sri Lanka were described during this project's fieldwork by citizens of the Jaffna District as "barbarians" and "terrorists", with the deep-seated resentment and prejudice still existing between the ethnicities very evident.

Research into the differences experienced in the development process between a post-conflict and a post-war context is only recently beginning to occur. However, this is an area of research which could prove to be greatly important in the long-term success of peacebuilding and reconstruction projects after decades of violence, such as what has been experienced in Sri Lanka. Such research could place further pressure on the Sri Lankan government to investigate alleged war crimes, hopefully leading to greater dialogue, reconciliation and sustained peace.

Figures 15: Refugees in IDP Camp at the end of Sri Lankan civil war.



Source: *The Times*, (access date: May 27th, 2015)

5.3. Structural unemployment in the Jaffna District: An economic and social construct

The ‘structural’ nature of youth unemployment in Jaffna District is one of the key reasons why it has become a sustained problem in the region. ‘Structural Unemployment’ is a longer-lasting, often institutionalised, form of unemployment in which fundamental shifts in an economy, or societal features of a community, interact to create sustained unemployment for a specific section of society. Structural unemployment is typically caused by recession, conflict, or poor policy implementation; it can last for decades, and may need radical policy change to be fixed (Herz & Van Rens, 2011; Diamond, 2013). In the majority of cases, structural unemployment is created due to a mismatch between the availability of jobs and an excess amount of workers attempting to gain employment (Herz & Van Rens, 2011). The fundamental mismatch between the number of available positions and the large quantities of people who wish to obtain jobs, means that structural unemployment is generally believed to be one of the more permanent forms of unemployment. In developed Western countries the inequality between the amount of jobs and those seeking employment is typically exacerbated by extraneous factors such as technology, competition and government policy (Diamond, 2013). However, in developing countries it is more likely to be the social, cultural or political context of the area that creates the sustained unemployment of some sectors of society, with youth typically the worst affected (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). In Jaffna District, structural unemployment is a result of the country’s civil war, the underfunded education system, societal expectations of employment, and the ineffectual central government post-conflict development policy.

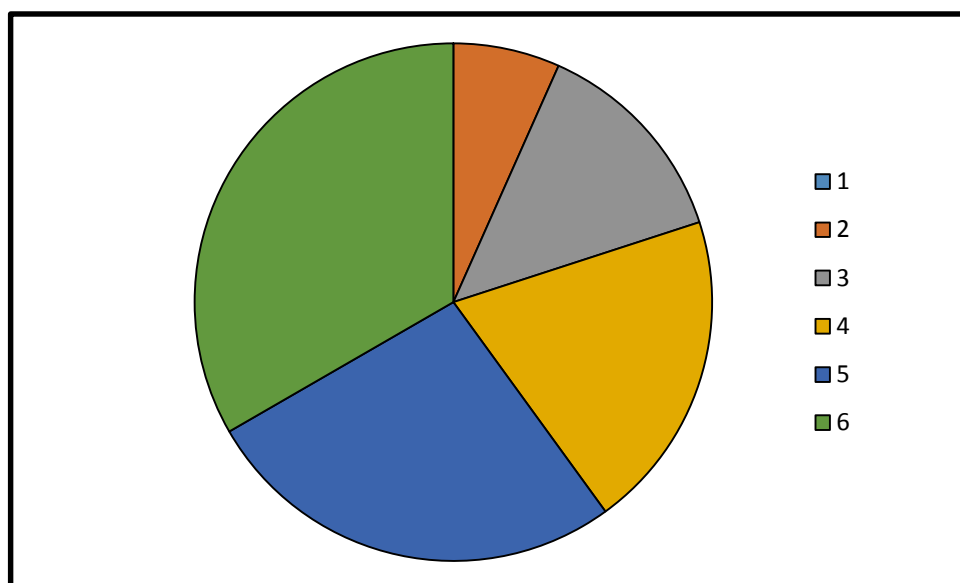
The 27 year long Sri Lanka civil war was clearly a significant factor in the creation of post-conflict, structural youth unemployment in Jaffna District. The destruction and loss of life that occurred during the period of violence greatly hindered the economic development of the region, and subsequently the opportunities for employment and livelihood creation. Jaffna District, like the rest of the North and East of Sri Lanka, was hugely affected by the war. An estimated 100,000 people were killed nationwide during the conflict, but the greater proportion of those were likely to have died in those areas of the proposed Tamil Eelam (Stone, 2011). Due to the confusion and lack of statistics collected during the conflict period, official statistics on the number of deaths in Jaffna District from the civil war do not exist. Along with the large number of war casualties, possibly as many as one million Sri Lankan Tamils emigrated to Western, Arab and South Asian nations during the war (Fearon & Laitin, 2011). Once again,

due to Tamils making up the significant proportion of those living in the North and East of Sri Lanka, districts such as Jaffna were worst affected by the departure of large numbers of their citizens. Simultaneously, as a result of Sri Lanka's island geography, and the ethnic nature of the civil war, meaning that fleeing Tamils had few places within the country to escape, the majority of those who were able to emigrate were the most well-educated and of the highest socio-economic status. While many maintain strong attachment to the communities which they left, the reasons for the departure of many of Jaffna District's elite are obvious; greater security, better educational opportunities for their children, and higher living standards. These sentiments are exemplified in this response:

“I am a patriot, I love this country. But I don't want my son to grow up here in Jaffna. He will have no opportunities, no chance to succeed.” – Key Informant 14, (6th March, 2015).

This ‘brain drain’, as a result of the civil war, has been a key factor in inhibiting development of the region, clearly demonstrating the significance of the war on subsequent employment issues.

Figure 16: Student respondents' years between school and tertiary education.

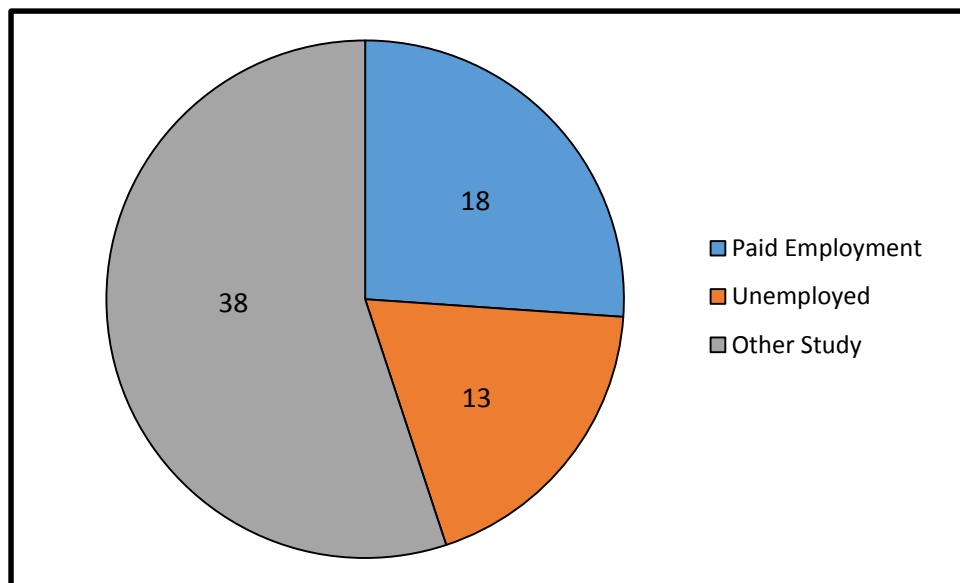


Source: Author's Field research (2015)

Jaffna District's overwhelmed and inefficient education system is another key component of the structural nature of the region's youth unemployment issues. Many of the youth unemployment problems experienced in Jaffna District are associated with Sri Lanka's national issues with education. Despite being a nation of over 22 million people, Sri Lanka has only 15 Universities, meaning only ten percent of high school graduates are able to attend a University (this rate is just over 65 percent of the enrolment rate in the USA) (Key Informant

3, 2015). University entrance is incredibly competitive nationwide, with students gaining the highest grade in their final year A-level exams typically attending the top ranking University of Peradeniya (Kandy) or the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (Colombo), while the majority of the remaining entrants select to attend the closest of the regional universities (such as the University of Jaffna). Of this ten percent of high school graduates who enter university, the majority must typically wait 2 or 3 years before beginning their tertiary studies due to the backlog of students who wish to attend (see Fig. 16), adding to the structural nature of the post-secondary school unemployment. As shown in the graph below (see Fig. 17), many prospective University students attempt to fill these transitional years with other forms of study, such as English language or IT courses, or training at technical colleges. Although some are able to find interim employment during this period of waiting, many spend the years between the completion of secondary school and the beginning of University study, unemployed, and living at home with their parents (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009).

Figure 17: Student respondents' post-school time utilisation prior to tertiary education.



Source: Author's Field research (2015)

Those who are lucky enough to graduate from secondary school and enter the University of Jaffna typically face a second phase of structural unemployment after they graduate. In Sri Lanka, the majority of Bachelors degrees take four years to complete, however, it is common in Jaffna District for the degree to take far longer owing to delays in the study process. Many students, especially those from lower income families, are forced to delay their studies and instead return home to assist with supporting their family's livelihood. This is particularly common among the few students from agricultural backgrounds, as an unusually dry rainy season or small harvest means that labour is likely to be required. Due to these delays, some students at the University of Jaffna are unlikely to graduate with their Bachelors degree until

they reach 26 or 27, further hindering their progress into employment. The structural nature of unemployment is also experienced by Jaffna District's high school graduates who do not go on to attend university. However, many of the problems they face are governed by the societal expectations of employment that are associated with the various classes and castes of Jaffna District's Tamil culture.

In Jaffna District the strict social and cultural norms of the Tamil people have a large impact on which jobs young people are able to undertake, further complicating the structural nature of the region's youth unemployment problem. As a result of the prevalence of Hinduism in Jaffna District, a form of India's prominent 'caste system' exists in the region. A caste system is a form of social stratification that enforces the continuation of hereditary titles, socio-economic status, relationships and occupations. Although the variety of caste system enforced by religious, historical and sociocultural factors in Jaffna District is not as rigid as it is in many parts of India, the caste system, along with other societal expectations relating to gender and prestige, restrict the potential areas in which a young person may be able to gain employment. This restriction creates a structural version of unemployment, as a young person who has been born into a high caste will not seek employment in areas that their family do not approve, even if they have been unable to find employment in all other potential avenues. The jobs which have the highest social standing in Jaffna District are any jobs that are in the public sector, the so-called 'government jobs'. This is a somewhat bizarre contradiction, as the majority Tamil population of Jaffna District also maintains a long-held fear and resentment towards the predominantly Sinhalese government. However, positions within the government sector retain the highest standing in Jaffna District due to three factors; employment security, desirable hours and salary, and a government-guaranteed pension. The willingness of graduates to remain unemployed for up to five years before finally gaining government employment, clearly demonstrates this unique situation:

"It's a structural unemployment, and between 24 and 28 it's endemic. All graduates struggle to get initial jobs, so more and more are looking to leave the country immediately following University." – Key Informant 9, (22th February, 2015).

The economic benefits and security of receiving a government wage and pension are not the only beneficial aspects of obtaining employment in the public sector, as, despite the lack of a guaranteed pension, many private sector jobs pay far better than their government counterparts. However, due to the social hierarchy associated with employment in Jaffna District, men who gain government jobs become far more eligible as potential marriage candidates. In Jaffna

District, as in the majority of regions in Sri Lanka, arranged marriage is still the common avenue for young people to find a husband or wife (Roberts, 2013). Meaning that obtaining desirable employment, is not only important for the security of one's family well-being, but also for one's future prospect of marriage. As a result, structural employment of young people occurs as they wait for government employment:

“In Tamil society, everyone wants a government job. Even if it was a poultry farm, they would want it to be a government poultry farm.” – Key Informant 6, (27th February, 2015).

The structural nature of unemployment in Jaffna District is more starkly apparent for young females, due to the more challenging societal expectations of employment placed on the different genders. During the period of LTTE occupation in the Northern Province the status of women was raised within the local communities, as the equality-based policy of the Tamil militia created policies to remove old social hierarchies based on caste and gender (Jordan & Denov, 2013). However, in the post-conflict period old traditions of strongly defined gender roles have come back into prominence in Jaffna District, resulting in structural employment for young women following the conclusion of their studies. Contrary to other developing nations in South Asia, Sri Lankan girls make up more than 50 percent of University students, with females comprising over 80 percent of the University of Jaffna's Arts Faculty. This imbalance is caused by three main factors; a demographic imbalance as a result of young male deaths in the civil war, young women in the post-war period increasingly want to leave the household and seek empowerment, and gender stereotyping of jobs such as teachers, clerks and librarians leads to greater female enrolment in the Arts field of study. However, despite this surge in female educational achievement at the tertiary level, many young women in Jaffna District still face structural unemployment due to intense competition for the few varieties of perceived gender appropriate jobs. Although many young women graduate from the University of Jaffna and other such educational institutions in the region every year with top level degrees, due to the finite number of jobs perceived as being 'socially acceptable' for young women, many will not use their degree for future employment, but will instead remain living at home with their parents until a suitable marriage partner is arranged for them (Hyndman & De Alwis, 2003). This process, which is not only unfair on the many young women who have studied to a high level, also reduces benefits which these graduates could provide for the local community by confining them to lives as housewives, or to employment which does not utilise the skills which they gained throughout university. This gender dynamic is just another example of the strict social and cultural norms present in Jaffna District which further complicate the jobs which

young people are able to undertake. The structural nature of the region's youth unemployment problem is furtherer complicated by the questionable post-conflict development policies implemented by the national government, which have failed to address key aspects of youth integration in Jaffna District.

The programme of post-conflict development policies implemented by the Rajapaksa government in the Northern Province, following the end of the war in 2009, was undertaken on a superficial level and failed to address the true needs of the population in areas such as Jaffna District (DeVotta, 2013). As a result of the many years of conflict, great suspicion still remains between the Sri Lankan Government and the predominantly Tamil citizenry of the Northern Province. In the immediate aftermath of the war, July 2009, the government implemented its 'Emergency Northern Recovery Project' (Sivakumar, 2013). This programme was mainly designed to restore the livelihoods of over 290,000 IDPs in the Northern Province, and to begin to redevelop the region through direct financing, a workfare programme, and the reconstruction of essential services and economic infrastructure across the five districts (Vavuniya, Mannar, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Jaffna). An initial 'cash grant' of 20,000r (\$222.00 NZD) was given to returning IDPs to assist in the immediate re-building of livelihoods (Sivakumar, 2013). However, according to Key Informant 5, no conditions or directions were given on how to spend the money, leading to many using it to reacquire possessions which they had lost during the war, rather than using it to invest in their land or create a small business as was hoped (Key Informant 5, 2015). Following this grant, the three month (February to April, 2010) 'Cash for Work' scheme, attempted to provide a short-term fix to regional post-conflict unemployment issues by paying 5000r (\$53.00 NZD) to labourers per month to complete infrastructure work for the government. This scheme, which was funded by the World Bank, while successful in greatly improving the war-damaged infrastructure, failed to provide long-term employment to any of the local residents involved, and due to the majority of the technical roles still being filled by well-trained counterparts from the South, most of the Northern labourers involved failed to gain any new employable skills. The questionable success of the government's initial 'Emergency Northern Recovery Project' has been characteristic of the various attempts at development and reconstruction since the war's end, with only marginal gains being passed on to those in most need. However, Key Informant 6 believed that government sponsored development could be the key to addressing Jaffna District's youth unemployment issues:

"Community-based development is taking place, but government sponsored development is not occurring to the levels that are needed. Market-led processes don't lead to a growth in overall socio-economic development for a community; they only

serve to increase war-created inequality. The government needs to invest in infrastructure, but more importantly also in industries that will provide benefit for the entire society. Not a single government investment has occurred in an industry which will create mass employment” – Key Informant 6, (27th February, 2015).

The future involvement of the national government in the development of the Northern Province is uncertain, with ongoing attempts by the Chief Minister of the Northern Provincial Government to increase the province’s autonomy. It is unclear whether these steps will continue following the election in January 2015 of the new President, Maithripala Sirisena, or whether the new central government administration will recommit to multifaceted development policy in the Northern Province. Overall, it has been this lack of coordinated and multifaceted development policy from the national government in Jaffna District that has contributed to the region’s structural youth unemployment.

The ‘structural’ nature of youth unemployment in Jaffna District is one of the key contributory factors that has resulted in the unemployment of young people becoming a sustained issue in the region. Structural unemployment for young people, following the end of both their secondary and tertiary education, is often long-lasting, and has become a hindrance to potential development in the region. Several factors combine to create the youth unemployment’s structural nature, factors that are economic, social and political in nature. But the fundamental mismatch between desirable jobs and the large quantities of young people who are seeking employment can only be addressed if the issues raised in this chapter are explored, understood, and structural changes are made within Jaffna District.

5.4. The Tamil diaspora: The significance of remittances for youth in Jaffna District.

The ‘Tamil diaspora’ refers to the significant numbers of Sri Lankan Tamil people who are now dispersed across the globe following their departure from Sri Lanka during the 27 years of the country’s ethnically based civil war. While the interaction between Tamil people living abroad, and their ancestral communities in Jaffna District is viewed as being mainly positive, there is a growing belief among some that the significant amounts of money being received by young people in Jaffna District from family members living outside of Sri Lanka is actually hindering their desire to work and, as a result is having a negative impact on development in the region. Like other conflict-based diasporas, the Sri Lankan Tamil exiles who settled in a variety of different locations around the world have maintained strong links with the

communities from where they came, and continue to provide financial assistance to those back in Sri Lanka. This financial support, and associated political petitioning, was particularly prevalent during the years of conflict, with the LTTE only able to continue its fight to secure Tamil Eelam because of the significant assistance it received from Sri Lankan Tamils living outside the conflict zone (Orjuela, 2008). However, with the end of the conflict, the negative effects of the significant amounts of money returning unchecked into Jaffna District may now be outweighing the previous benefits, especially for young people attempting to gain employment and become more engaged in the community.

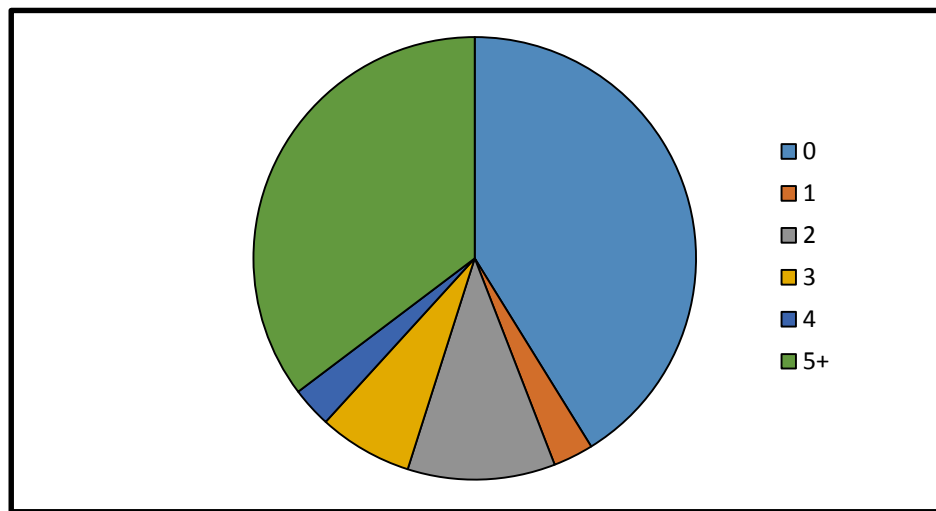
The migration of Sri Lankan Tamils to other regions of the globe began under British colonial rule, as Tamils attempted to take up economic and educational opportunities by travelling under British protection. Malaysia, Singapore and various parts of India became popular destinations for many Jaffna Tamils, who were able to gain positions in the British bureaucracy through hard work and loyalty to the British Empire. This historic emigration from Jaffna District in many ways prevented the region from flourishing during the colonial period:

“Mass migration is not new. During the war it was based on security and surviving the war, secondary was employment and education opportunities. But man-power was wasted in Jaffna for decades prior. And it was always the best and brightest leaving, which constantly held the District back” – Key Informant 16, (9th March, 2015).

Far less migration occurred in the 40 years following Sri Lankan independence, until the increasingly Sinhalese Nationalist policies of the Sri Lanka government and the anti-Tamil riots of ‘Black July’ in 1983 re-invigorated the mass exodus of Tamils. The beginning of the civil war between the government and the LTTE later in 1983 further fuelled the mass migration of Tamils away from their historic homelands, with wealthy professionals being the section of society that fled in the most significant numbers. By the civil war’s end in 2009, it is estimated that over 800,000 Sri Lankan Tamils had left the country, leaving an enormous hole in the communities of regions such as Jaffna District, (particularly due to the wealthiest and best-educated typically being the largest represented section of society that fled) (Orjuela, 2008; Sri Lankan Government: Department of Census & Statistics, 2012). This unequal distribution of migrants is demonstrated in the graph below (see Fig. 18), with a large portion of respondents having no family members living outside of Sri Lanka, but of those who did have family in the Tamil diaspora, the majority had over five family members living overseas. This is a typical phenomenon among conflict-based diasporas, with families either being wealthy enough to

entirely depart from a conflict area, or in contrast, not having enough money for any members to escape (Orjuela, 2008).

Figure 18: Number of questionnaire respondents' relatives living outside of Sri Lanka.



Source: Author's Field research (2015)

The majority of Sri Lankan Tamils who fled during the civil war established proxy-Tamil communities in the Western nations where they gained residence, with Australia, Canada, the UK, the USA, France, Germany, Switzerland and South Africa, all now being home to significant Tamil communities (Hess & Korf, 2014; Jones, 2014). The process of migration in the face of Sri Lanka's civil war was best summed up by Key Informant 1:

"If we aren't represented we will leave. And just like any other man, animal or bird that is attacked or systematically marginalised, we will flee." – Key Informant 1, (24th February, 2015).

The most significant effect of the Tamil diaspora on the people of Jaffna District is the large amount of money that is sent from family members living abroad to family members in the District. While no statistics exist on the extent of these remittances, it is well known that Jaffna city is home to far more banks and financial institutions than other comparatively sized cities across Sri Lanka, predominantly due to the need for various monetary services as a result of incoming foreign currency. Despite the end of the civil war, the majority of the diaspora are unwilling to return to Jaffna District and physically invest in the region's development. However, remittances have continued to pour into the District, presenting an interesting development conundrum. While remittances represent a key funding source in terms of community-based post-conflict development, the money that young people in Jaffna District receive from diaspora family members is typically spent on luxury items such as cellphones, televisions, and clothes, and is not used to improve livelihoods, create employment, or improve

the overall well-being of the individual or community (Jones, 2014). Key Informant 5 told of youth within Jaffna District who in fact receive such significant amounts of money from their overseas family members that they do not seek any employment at all, and therefore provide no benefit to the community (Key Informant 5, 2015). While circumstances such as these are extreme cases, Key Informant 9 also believes that the Tamil diaspora could be unwittingly having a negative impact on Jaffna District if they continue to provide large quantities of cash to young people, particularly if these remittances diminish the incentive of youth to gain education and employment, and to assist in the development of their home.

Overall the complex relationship between the development of Jaffna District, and the aid and support provided by the global Sri Lankan diaspora, must be organised in such a way as to incentivise the development. With youth unemployment already a well-established issue in the region, the free provision of large quantities of money to already disengaged youth by overseas based family members, needs to be discouraged. However, the investment of diaspora members in community-based development programmes and educational initiatives in the region could provide significant support for the development of Jaffna District, and the amelioration of issues associated with youth unemployment.

Vignette 2 – Vatharawatti (Jaffna District)

Vatharawatti is a small rural town located in Jaffna District's agricultural heartland. Home to around forty families, Vatharawatti is a typically impoverished community within the Jaffna District, and it suffers greatly from a lack of educational and employment opportunities for its young people. Apart from the traditional agricultural occupation prospects, the majority of young people within this community find employment as unskilled construction and railway labourers. The majority are not engaged in permanent work, with all unskilled labour in the District being seasonal, and the majority of working weeks only consisting of four days. Contracted labourers receive meals and accommodation when they are working on a project, however, all contracts are fixed-terms and when there is no development occurring they lose their jobs. Sri Lanka has no Universal Pension or Unemployment/Sickness/Accident Benefit, meaning low socio-economic citizens of Jaffna District are forced to work until they are no longer able to, or when they can depend on others for support. During the raining season no work is available for most agricultural and construction labourers, meaning for up to four months a year they receive no income. As a result of this occupational uncertainty, Vatharawatti has failed to see significant development in the last 30 years, and is facing an increasing problem of young people leaving to seek educational and employment opportunities elsewhere. All the youth interviewed in Vatharawatti stated they would be willing to travel to other parts of Sri Lanka, or overseas, if that meant obtaining full-time secure employment:

“Some are trying to get more skills so we can apply for Visas. Maybe I'll come join you in New Zealand, haha...” – Focus Group 1.

Desperation for employment, and the ability to improve one's circumstances, lead one of the interviewees to attempt twice to buy passage on an illegal migration boat to Australia. On both occasions he was been unable to make the journey and has lost the money he invested. Despite these failures, he is not deterred, and intends to attempt to make the journey again. Vatharawatti is just one example of the extensive unemployment issues and lack of educational and training opportunities available to youth in the Jaffna District.

Figure 19: Farmers tending onion fields near town of Vatharawatti, Jaffna District.



Source: Author's Field research (2015)

5.5. Conclusion

Overall, it is evident after viewing both the published literature and the data collected during fieldwork that Jaffna District is facing various issues associated with youth unemployment, many of which are exacerbated due to the nature of the post-conflict development process which is currently underway in the region. This chapter has aimed to highlight some of the conditions that have caused youth unemployment to become such a substantial issue, such as; the significance of the post-conflict environment, youth unemployment's 'structural' nature, and the potentially negative influence of remittances from the Tamil diaspora. Through the use of available government statistics, key informant responses, relevant pieces of grey literature, and graphs created from questionnaire answers, a multifaceted evaluation of the employment problem facing young people within the Jaffna District has been undertaken. As demonstrated by the above graphs, unemployment among young people in Sri Lanka is not an uncommon phenomenon, however, due to the post-conflict nature of Jaffna District the issue is exacerbated significantly. The 'structural' nature of Jaffna District's youth unemployment has also added to the longevity and institutionalised nature of the problem. Structural unemployment is a result of the country's civil war, the overwhelmed education system, societal expectations of employment, and the ineffective central government post-conflict development policy. These factors have combined to exacerbate the youth unemployment situation that contains a fundamental mismatch between the desirable jobs, and the large quantities of young people who are seeking employment. This youth unemployment problem, coupled with the complicating factor of the large amount of remittances that flow into Jaffna District from the Tamil diaspora, can only be addressed if the issues raised in this chapter are explored, understood, and then structural changes are made within Jaffna District.

Due to the possibility of large numbers of unemployed youths causing political and social instability, particularly in a post-conflict environment, the situation within Jaffna District prevents glaring difficulties for the development and rehabilitation of the area. Having explained the extent of the youth unemployment issues within this chapter, the following chapter shall describe the strategies currently being implemented by various actors to remedy these problems.

6. Addressing youth unemployment **Strategies for development in a post-conflict environment**

6.1. Introduction

As we have seen in Chapter 5, the extent of youth unemployment in Jaffna District is hindering the process of development in the region, a process which is dramatically complicated as a result of Sri Lanka's post-conflict nature. Just as various causes and complicating factors exist as to why youth unemployment is so prevalent within the District, a similarly large and varied number of actors and programmes are working, both directly and indirectly, to address the issues surrounding the engagement and employment of young people in Jaffna city and the surrounding area. These actors, for the benefit of this research, can be broadly categorised into three groups; educational institutions, community-based vocational training initiatives, and international NGOs, all of which have implemented various strategies and programmes designed to improve employment and community engagement among young people in Jaffna District. By comparing these strategies and programmes with each other, and with similar attempts at youth employment projects in other post-conflict settings, we are able to gain an appreciation of the success and potential areas of improvement of the schemes currently underway in Jaffna District. In a region that has historically been dependent on the primary sector (agriculture and fishing), the ability of youth employment schemes to promote entrepreneurship and diversity, as well as incorporating new technologies into current livelihoods, is seen by many as being crucial to the post-conflict development of local communities (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). This chapter explores the ways, and the extent to which, the three groups of youth employment programme creators have been able to engage young people in Jaffna District, and assist in the process of long-term job creation.

This second chapter of results and discussion directly addresses the issues raised in Research Question number two (see Methods Chapter); providing primary and secondary data which outline the strategies which are currently in place to combat the issues associated with the serious youth unemployment situation in Jaffna District.

6.2. Employment through education: The importance of educational institutions.

For generations, Sri Lankan Tamils have viewed education as a crucially important aspect of both their identity, and their pathway to development (Canagarajah, 2012). This

elevated status bestowed upon education in Jaffna District, (as discussed in Chapter 5) has often seen parents forego a variety of necessities in order to send their children to school.

“People in Jaffna invest in education. Not property or riches, but their children’s education”. – Key Informant 21, (24th March, 2015).

Like the majority of other industries and services that were greatly disrupted during the period of civil conflict, the previously well-regarded educational institutions of Jaffna District were left isolated, an underfunded, following three decades of violence. Not only did this period of instability greatly disrupt the daily lives of thousands of young Jaffna District residents, but the majority were also unable to continue along the natural education process, resulting in the widespread lack of requisite knowledge and skills to create businesses or to be desirable candidates in the labour market (Hettige & Salih, 2010). In order to return Jaffna District to its pre-war levels of educational prestige, several of the region’s educational institutions have made concerted efforts to increase both student numbers and the quality of their education in the post-conflict period (Vodopivec & Withanachchi, 2010). In 2013, the University of Jaffna expanded its programmes to include the new Faculty of Engineering and a rebuilt Faculty of Agriculture, while the Jaffna College of Technology has instituted a variety of new courses. The recent construction of the new vocational training school (2010), the University College of Jaffna (2013), is further evidence of the attempts to upgrade educational provision and output in Jaffna District, in the hope of enhancing the employability of the region’s youth. Concurrently, government-led training programmes such as the National Apprentice & Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), and the Skills Through English for Public Servants Institute (STEPS), have also been implemented within Jaffna District since the cessation of violence, leading to increased opportunities for young people to upskill and gain further qualifications before attempting to gain employment. It is hoped that such programmes, and the upgrading of local education institutions, will have similarly positive impacts on the youth unemployment situation encountered in Jaffna District, as was experienced in other regions of Sri Lanka that undertook educational reform prior to the end of the civil war (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010). By providing educational opportunities for a wide array of academic abilities and career aspirations through access to a university, vocational colleges, and skills-based training programmes, the drive towards upgrading the accessibility to various forms of education will hopefully see a reduction in the structural unemployment of young people in Jaffna District.

The University of Jaffna is the pre-eminent higher education facility within the Tamil-majority regions of Sri Lanka. Established in 1974, as the sixth branch of the University of Sri Lanka, prior to its transition to becoming an autonomous university in 1979, the university became a symbol of the Tamil people's academic heritage and achievements. Seriously isolated and underfunded during the civil war, the University was viewed suspiciously by the Sri Lankan Army as a recruiting force for the LTTE, leading to increased restrictions and surveillance of lecturers and students (Shastri, 2009). Despite these obstacles, the University remained open throughout the conflict, however its ability to provide the requisite standard of education to drive young people into business creation and employment was greatly inhibited. As a result of this breakdown in higher education in the region:

"...those already educated or seeking further education tend to migrate to western nations, while Jaffna's unemployed and uneducated have increasingly over the last decade travelled to the Middle East to seek greater pay for low-skilled jobs". – Focus Group 2, (17th March, 2015).

According to several members of the academic staff, the University of Jaffna has increased in both size and quality of education provided in recent years, with the new Faculty of Engineering and the rebuilt Faculty of Agriculture representing examples of the returning prominence of the institution. However, despite the perceived positive effects which this resurgence might have on the extensive youth labour issues within Jaffna District, several academic staff believe that the style of learning that occurs at the University is not conducive to creating potential entrepreneurs or high-value employees:

"The nature of teaching and learning is not outcomes-based; it does not create valuable employees. It does not help that few private sector jobs are available in the District, particularly for Arts graduates." – Key Informant 6, (27th February, 2015).

A lack of technology, quality resources, and high-level academic teacher training are seen as the key reasons for this lack of outcomes-based education. The majority of University teaching areas lack computers, data projectors, and up-to-date textbooks, leading to outdated 'chalk and talk' teaching methods which do not allow for the creation of employable graduates:

"Graduates always have high initial unemployment. It is structural unemployment, and between 24 and 28 it is endemic. Arts degrees, general science, management, commerce, all struggle to get initial jobs. Medicine graduates are the only ones that are

immediately employed. And typically, so are engineers, but their jobs in Sri Lanka are low paid, so many leave the country.” – Key Informant 21, (24th March, 2015).

In order to fix this problem, and hopefully, help remedy the structural unemployment experienced by University of Jaffna graduates, several of the academic staff believe the learning process must work backwards from the skills and areas of expertise that employers are seeking. In other words, the delivery of education within Jaffna District must service the areas that are of particular need, especially due to the unique and intensely challenging process of post-conflict development that is occurring. A professor within the University of Jaffna’s newly created Faculty of Graduate Studies stated:

“The community must create linkages between the University, the community and industries. This will allow for the creation of easier passages for graduates into private sector employment.” – Key Informant 21, (24th March, 2015).

Several other University of Jaffna academic staff share this belief, with many stating that the education system is not designed to create graduates with the skills needed to develop the region:

“Things are all perfect in the books, but once the students get out of their comfort area, it’s a bit messy”. – Key Informant 6, (27th February, 2015).

Therefore, although the revival and revitalisation of the University of Jaffna since the end of the civil war can be viewed as a positive step in the development of the post-conflict Jaffna District, in order for the region to effectively address the structural nature of its vast youth unemployment issues, a sustained effort to update and redirect the style of tertiary education is potentially necessary. And with the University only providing education to just under 6000 students, attention amongst the District’s policy makers must also be proportionally directed to the significant numbers of young people who are attempting to upskill and find employment outside of the tertiary education system.

The University College and the College of Technology are both vocational education facilities within the Jaffna District which provide technical and vocational training to young people who do not meet the required grade for University entrance. Established in 1959, the Jaffna College of Technology provides training for 1200 students in areas such as electrical and automotive engineering, welding, carpentry, and accounting, English, and computer science. These courses vary in difficulty and duration, with some up to three years, and some as short as only 2 months, depending on the level of competency required. All courses undertaken on a

full-time basis are provided free of charge, and students that are identified by the College as coming from low socio-economic backgrounds are provided with 3000 rupees (\$32.53 NZD) a month to assist with transport and living costs. The demand for courses provided by the College of Technology is always incredibly high, with over 4000 people applying every year, many of whom have applied several times before. Preference is given to students who completed their A-Levels at school, leading to many O-Level students constantly failing to gain entry into any training programmes. While the courses offered are widely regarded as providing a good basis for potential business creation and employment, many lecturers bemoan the lack of job opportunities for the graduates:

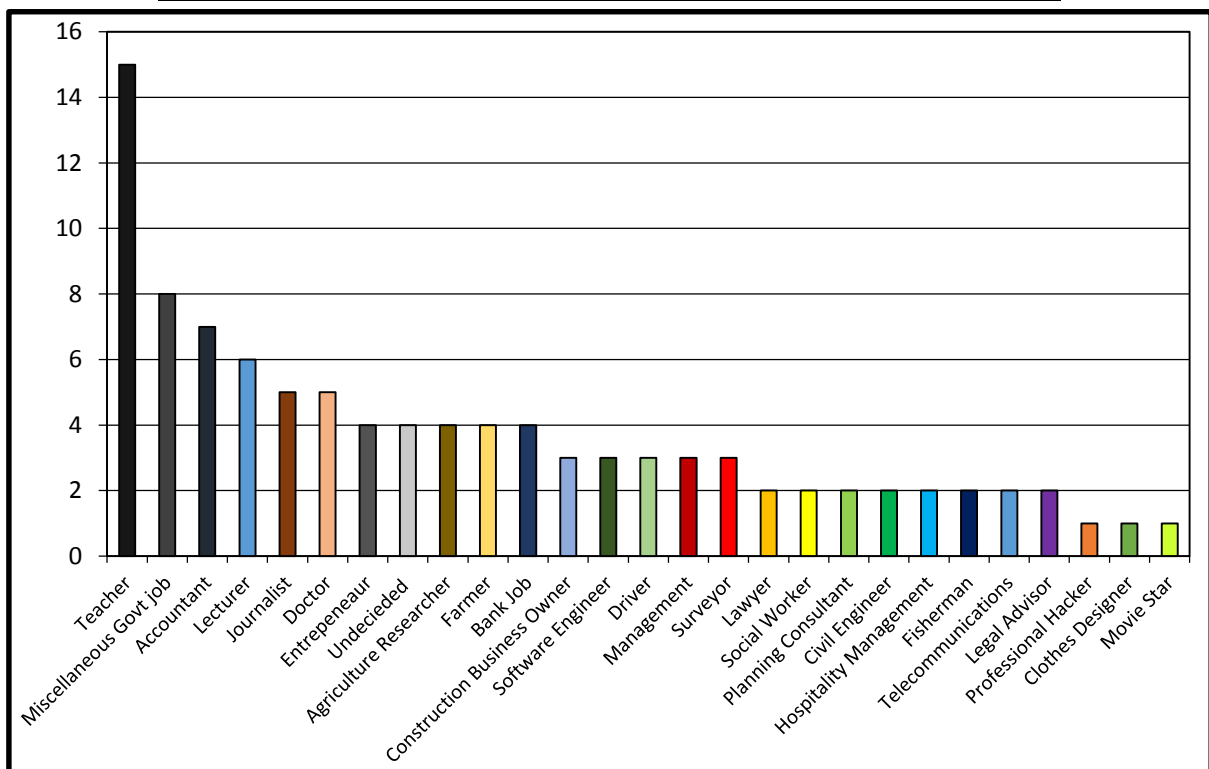
“There is little to no private sector in Jaffna. The West, South and East of Sri Lanka have all recently received heavy investment from the central government, India and China, but Jaffna has received almost none. This is preventing jobs and development, and causing all the young people to leave”. – Focus Group 3, (16th March, 2015).

These feelings clearly mirror the previously stated sentiments of lecturers at the University of Jaffna, who stated that the youth unemployment issues experienced in Jaffna District can only be resolved through sustained collaboration between the government, the private sector, and educational institutions. One piece of government funded post-conflict development is the recently completed Jaffna University College, a complementary vocational training facility which had its first intake of students in February 2015. Construction of the facility was part of a new government initiative to provide high quality vocational training throughout Sri Lanka, with 25 new University Colleges being constructed all over the country. The Jaffna facility is the only College that uses the Tamil language as its predominant medium, and offers eight courses which include Food Technology, Hospitality, Beauty Therapy, Mechatronics and Construction Technology. According to the College’s director, the facility’s role is to provide educational opportunities to those who would otherwise miss out:

“Our goal is to provide training to those who don’t meet University standards. Last year 250,000 students sat A-level exams, with over 200,000 passing. However, only 24,000 students could go to university nationwide. We particularly want to help poor students. Students from poor families are able to attend for free. Of the first intake, 70% are not paying for their course. The majority of the students are also coming from Jaffna District.” – Key Informant 28, (5th March, 2015).

The sheer number of applicants for Jaffna District’s educational institutions demonstrates the strong desire among the region’s youth population to better themselves and their communities. As shown in the graph below (see Fig. 20), despite many of the respondents having not yet undertaken any form of tertiary study or vocational training, the majority still maintained lofty career goals. This is further evidence of the structural nature of Jaffna District’s youth unemployment problem, as the majority of young people are unable to find fulfilling work in the post-conflict environment, despite their very best attempts to gain an education and to upskill.

Figure 20: Employment goals amongst questionnaire respondents.



Source: Author’s field research (2015)

Two other forms of tertiary education providers in Jaffna District are found in the work of the NAITA and STEPS organisations. NAITA, the National Apprentice & Industrial Training Authority, provides 150 craft training courses for high school graduates in Jaffna District, that include trades in electricity, metals, fabrics, IT, diesel engineering, entrepreneurship development, motorcycle repair, masonry and computer engineering. NAITA, which opened in Jaffna in 2006, receives the majority of its funding from the Sri Lankan government, while many of its students are provided with living allowances and transport funds by the German aid organisation GIZ. According to the Jaffna office director the programme is fulfilling its goals:

“The training programmes we provide are known as ‘establishment-based training’, which is predominantly work-experienced based, with on-site practical work being the largest component. Due to the lack of education requirements for our courses, displaced persons returning to Jaffna are often a large portion of our students. They have lost everything and are seeking skills.” – Key Informant 13, (4th March, 2015).

While this role of providing resettled IDPs is an incredibly important one, NAITA also faces the issues of discrimination towards its students due to social and economic hierarchies within Jaffna communities. Jobs such as masonry and construction are often viewed as not being suitable for certain castes within society, and often unemployed youths from high socio-economic backgrounds would rather remain unemployed than attend a NAITA training course. This clearly demonstrates the cultural and social aspects of Jaffna District’s youth unemployment problems, which are just as prevalent as the economic or political factors. In complete contrast to NAITA, the STEPS (Skill Through English for Public Servants) programme provides a curriculum focused on training in good governance, effective communication and management through high-quality English courses, a programme which is held in great esteem by all members of Jaffna District. English is seen as a ‘link language’, which can be not only used worldwide in business and education opportunities, but is also used as a ‘bridge building mechanism’ with Sinhalese from the south.

“We use English as a motivational tool to engage the youth in education.” – Key Informant 20, (16th March, 2015).

While STEPS’ specific goal is to provide teachers and other public servants with the chance to improve their English competency, their critical thinking skills, and expand their wider knowledge, the programme is also increasingly being opened up to include youth. For those students who are typically forced to wait a minimum two years after finishing high school before they can begin university, a STEPS course is seen as an excellent chance to further their education and employability. The high quality standard of the STEPS programme is key:

“A typical state school in Jaffna can have up to 100 students in each class. STEPS limits class size to around 20 students to allow for a greater amount of personal teaching time. This has led to high course completion rates and increased opportunities for students in future employment.” – Key Informant 20, (16th March, 2015).

Because the success of the STEPS programme depends so heavily on the quality of the classes they provide, the organisation has enlisted the local British Council office to provide mentoring

and training for STEPS teachers. STEPS is also part of the Northern Provincial Government's vision to create a centre of ongoing professional development, leading to its funding stream being secure. Overall, specialist programmes, such as those provided by NAITA and STEPS, provide a key intermediary for those young people who have the required qualifications, or who are yet to gain entry, to Jaffna District's tertiary education institutions.

For centuries education has been one of the great pillars of Tamil society in northern Sri Lanka, and now, as the many communities look to rebuild in the post-conflict period, educational institutions will play a key role in creating a new generation of well-educated, highly skilled, and employable young people. However, as stated above, there are still many factors restricting this process, with the quality of the education provided, the lack of positions available at each educational institution, and the social perception of different careers, being three of the many reasons why youth unemployment in the Jaffna District remains an issue which warrants further attention and support.

6.3. Strengthening livelihoods: community-based vocational training initiatives

In the face of the paucity of jobs and educational opportunities, several community-based organisations in Jaffna District have begun providing vocational training and educational funding for young people. Some of these organisations take part in development work throughout Sri Lanka (SewaLanka, Sarvodaya), while others are local to Jaffna District (SOND and JSAC). Simultaneously, the region's governing body, the District Secretariat, is attempting to coordinate these programmes through new appointees such as the Skills Development and Human Resources Officers. It is hoped that this community-based training will not only help with the post-conflict development of the region and alleviate youth unemployment issues, but will also encourage community ownership of the education and employment process (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vodopivec, 2010).

SewaLanka is a Sri Lankan development organisation that attempts to 'grow the capacity' of disadvantaged rural communities. In Jaffna District its main role with youth is in providing programmes for young people returning to the community from IDP Camps with leadership, life-skills, social development and career guidance courses. These two-day courses are implemented throughout the Northern Province, and begin by assessing the participants' skills and interests so they can be tailored to suit each young person's goals. SewaLanka also provides financial support for 15 students to undertake vocational training through NAITA,

with recipients being selected according to the greatest need. Recently, SewaLanka has begun an entrepreneurship training programme, at the end of which graduates are able to apply for a grant to start a small business. This programme was created due to the recognition of a distinct lack of young entrepreneurs within Jaffna District:

“No one is willing to take risks. It’s a war legacy. Those who took risks then are now dead. Youth do not always recognise the potential for business creation in some areas. Many do not care for local, low-cost training opportunities which could provide them with sustained livelihoods.” – Key Informant 7, (28th February, 2015).

This lack of entrepreneurial fervour among young people has caused SewaLanka to employ a career officer in every District, a decision which was seen as particularly important in the Northern and Eastern Provinces where post-conflict government investment has been mainly on infrastructure and not enough on capacity building or job creation. In similar fashion to SewaLanka, the Sarvodaya organisation is a nationwide Sri Lankan development movement. Based on Buddhist teachings, Sarvodaya’s focus in Jaffna is on livelihood development and education. Additionally, the organisation has conducted ‘Mine Risk Education’ programmes in partnership with UNICEF, which have been successful in raising awareness in communities that still face danger from nearby minefields. The Centre for Child Development (CFCD) is another nationwide project that has grown its operations in Jaffna District since the cessation of the civil war. CFCD provides cash grants for school students from age five to high school graduation to assist with their schooling and transportation costs, believing that through the optimal distribution of resources they can achieve the best results for young people in need. Much of their work in the Northern Province is funded by foreign donors from Malaysia, Norway, Australia and the UK, meaning that they have been able to carry out much of their work since 2009 without any financial strain. With other bases across the Northern and Eastern provinces, CFCD is attempting to mitigate child poverty and a lack of opportunity across the war-torn regions of the country. The work of these three national organisations demonstrates the key role that Sri Lanka’s own development groups can play in the post-conflict upliftment of Jaffna District, particularly if the country’s government continues to be slow in its response to the obvious youth unemployment issues.

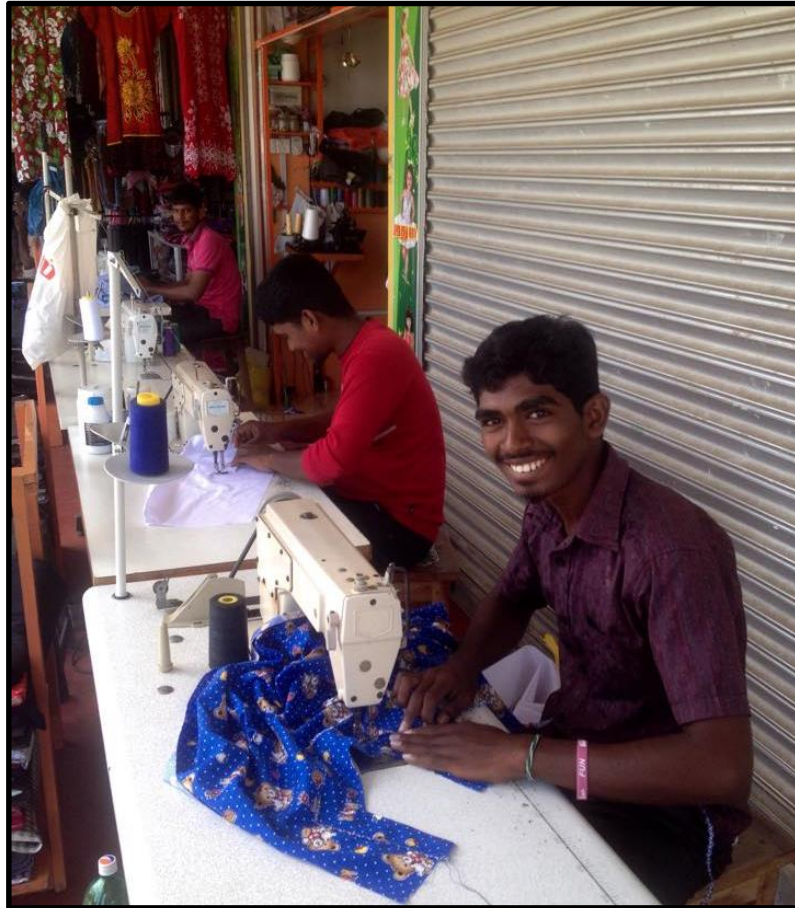
Several recently created, Jaffna-based community action groups have also begun to play a prominent role in efforts to end the region’s youth unemployment problems. For example, Jaffna Social Action Centre’s (JSAC) work is predominantly focused on assisting newly settled IDP’s to find employment, providing vocational training, housing and financial assistance.

According to a JSAC volunteer, heavy importance is placed on the relationship between the displaced and the host communities, so as to prevent future conflict and develop community links that reach across ethnic divisions. By re-establishing livelihoods, building capacity and providing social services, JSAC tries to reintegrate IDP's back into Jaffna District without them adding to the unemployment issues. JSAC also provides employer-driven vocational training, focusing on learning specific skills that employers are seeking, and pairing students with prospective jobs, such as hospitality, construction, nursing, ICT). According to a JSAC organiser:

“Young men in Jaffna District, often as a result of the war, are traumatised, disengaged, and uninterested in their community, leading to alcohol abuse. Community unity was greatly decreased by the war, leading to young people becoming increasingly disillusioned at the periphery of society.” – Key Informant 30, (20th March, 2015).

As a result of these issues, JSAC pays special attention to the social aspects of community development, focusing on re-establishing livelihoods, capacity building and social service provision, including providing safe houses for women and children affected by domestic violence. The social aspects of development in Jaffna District are also the key focus of SOND (the Social Organisation Network for Development), a community action group established in Jaffna in 2001. SOND works in the local Jaffna communities providing counselling, advocacy, and environmental protection services, in the hope of “creating a society and better living environment in a peaceful manner” (Key Informant 42, 2015). SOND's counselling services are becoming increasingly popular, mainly because the former President Rajapaksa's administration did not provide any services until his defeat in January 2015. These ‘psychosocial services’ are organised into specific age categories to provide the best results; men, women, senior citizens, youth, and children. Both SOND and JSAC have been able to provide services that are much needed in Jaffna District, particularly by young people, some of whom have faced long periods of conflict, disillusionment, unemployment and idleness, leading to a number of social issues. In a region that is still recovering from a variety of post-conflict issues, including those associated with youth unemployment, this variety of community-based social activism is seen as very important by researchers in the resolution of these problems (Schweitzer, 2012).

Figure 21: Students at JSAC community-based vocational training initiative.



Source: Author's field research (2015)

As we have seen, Jaffna District regional governing body, the District Secretariat, is attempting to coordinate the community-based development programmes in a mission against youth unemployment, through new appointees such as the Skills Development and the Human Resources Officers. Each of the 15 Divisions within Jaffna District has been instructed to employ a Skills Development Officer and a Human Resources Officer who attempt to coordinate recruitment and training of the unemployed and University graduates into either private or public sector employment. The Nallur Division, one of Jaffna District's most populous (66,032 residents in the 2013 census), reported that in the three months beginning January 2015 over 225 people completed the "Job Seeker" form, demonstrating the scale of the problem. According to Nallur's Skills Development Officer:

"A lack of resources on the Jaffna peninsula prevents heavy foreign or government investment, while an unreliable water supply, limited agriculture and no mineral deposits means that Jaffna District is an unlikely industrial centre. However, Jaffna District could possess a large amount of human capital and resources, with 75% of high school graduates leaving with A-levels." – Key Informant 26, (19th March, 2015).

Both the Skills Development and the Human Resources Officers who were interviewed mentioned their desire for educated young people to gain employment in government jobs, leading to intense competition that often results in many intelligent and qualified people being unable to find jobs in Jaffna District, and leading to an exodus ('brain drain'). Providing career guidance and encouraging further vocational training for students and graduates is seen as important, particularly due to the fact that some young people are able to survive on support from family members living abroad, leading to them feeling disinclined to work and uninterested in their own careers. These two new employment roles are designed to provide a link between the employer and potential employees, with candidates being identified and recruited into vocational programmes, educational institutions and new employment. It is hoped that these specific roles will prove to be catalysts in remedying Jaffna District's youth unemployment issues.

Overall, these community-based organisations working in Jaffna District, whether national bodies or local Jaffna groups, have begun in earnest providing vocational training and educational funding for young people since the end of the civil war in 2009. By encouraging community ownership of the education and employment process, these organisations are attempting to provide a connection between unemployed youths and fulfilling employment opportunities.

6.4. International cooperation on youth unemployment in Jaffna District:

For decades, international non-governmental development organisations have played key roles in the development of Sri Lanka, particularly in areas of education, employment and environmental sustainability (Amarasuriya, Gündüz & Mayer, 2009). Large donors, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have all provided money and planning for development strategies, while Aid NGOs like World Vision, Red Cross International, CARE, and Amnesty International have played key roles in providing emergency support during the 27 year long Sri Lankan Civil War and also following the Boxing Day Tsunami of December 2004. In a recent joint report, the ADB and World Bank suggested that particular importance should be placed on the "rigid labour market" and "uncertain policy environment", which they believed were having a significant detrimental effect on the job creation process for youth in Sri Lanka (Asian Development Bank, 2010: 52). The report recognised the difficult situation for youth within the Northern region of Sri Lanka "particularly on account of conflict", and proposed large-scale

policy shifts by the government in reference to the post-conflict labour markets, and a move from “job protection to worker protection” (Asian Development Bank, 2010: 20). While the publication of reports such as these by major international organisation like the ADB, World Bank or International Labour Organisation (ILO) traditionally provide the government of developing nations with potential directions for policy, in the case of youth employment processes in Jaffna District they provide little assistance, as the increasingly independent and nationally maligned Northern Province local government continues to undertake its post-conflict development reconstruction virtually independently from national government supervision. The ADB and World Bank report also fails to recognise the distinct cultural, social and political factors of the Tamil regions, characteristics that heavily influence the labour-market dynamics of Jaffna District, and subsequently the vulnerability of young people attempting to find employment. Therefore, it is the smaller and more direct action international actors that have had much greater impact on the post-conflict development of northern Sri Lanka, with the following NGOs focusing particularly on the youth unemployment problems experienced in Jaffna District (see Table.5).

Table 5: International NGOs involved in youth employment in Jaffna District

International NGO	<u>World Vision</u>	<u>Red Cross International</u>	<u>Pacific Asia Resource Centre Inter-People Cooperation (PARCIC)</u>	<u>German Development Cooperation (GIZ)</u>	<u>Vision-Fund</u>	<u>Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)</u>
Country of Origin	USA	Switzerland	Japan	Germany	USA	Switzerland
Mission Statement	Aid, Education	Healthcare, Post-conflict Development	Sustainable Livelihoods	Post-conflict Development, Peacebuilding	Micro-finance	Sustainable Development, Peacebuilding.
Youth Employment Focus	Livelihood Technology	Health Education, Grants.	Livelihood Technology.	Education, Vocational Training.	Micro-credit, Grants.	Post-war Rehabilitation.

Source: Author’s Field research (2015)

The main international NGOs which take an active role in resolving the youth unemployment issues of Jaffna District (see Table.5), do so through a variety of strategies which are dependent on the overriding mission of each organisation. NGOs like PARCIC and VisionFund, provide small-scale financial services to impoverished families under the condition that they use these micro-loans to invest in their livelihoods or small businesses, while some NGOs, like GIZ, seek

to invest in training and education. Others, such as the SDC, have attempted to engage those most at risk in the post-conflict setting by providing rehabilitation services for resettled families. The diverse array of services provided by these international organisations greatly assist the process of post-conflict development, particularly in the areas of peacebuilding and developing sustainable livelihoods, though a potential overreliance on foreign actors for stability must always be a consideration for a nation that has suffered greatly from internal strife.

The provision of micro-finance to families in developing communities has long been viewed as one of the most sustainable methods to increase development, through creating a new array of businesses that are able to provide employment to previously jobless members of society (Tilakaratna & Hulme, 2015). In Jaffna District, the international NGOs VisionFund Lanka and PARCIC, have provided this style of micro-credit to many impoverished families, so that they may be able to improve their livelihoods or create small businesses, with the goal of seeing these investments lead to a long-term reduction in the youth unemployment of the region. VisionFund Lanka, the micro-finance arm of World Vision in Sri Lanka, was founded in 2004 (Jaffna office opening in 2010) to empower struggling families by providing small loans, monetary advice, and other financial services so that they are able to start or develop a business. Like the majority of international NGOs active in Jaffna District, VisionFund is predominantly staffed by local Tamil residents, with one or two foreign nationals overseeing the regional projects of the NGO in question. VisionFund's micro-credit schemes were compared by one such employee to the hugely successful Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, as both organisations provide small loans at extremely low interest rates, which in turn improve the lives of the recipients and the lives of others in the community by generating employment:

“Many families living in the rural areas of the Northern Province have a basic livelihood; they have little or no means of improving themselves. For those who lack assets and are denied access to traditional credit providers, our work serves as an answered prayer”. – Key Informant 10, (1st March, 2015).

Like the Grameen Bank, VisionFund places special focus on empowering women, with over 95% of borrowers being female. The loans that are provided are staggered over several years and can be increased incrementally after the initial sum has been repaid. For example, a loan of 30,000 rupees (\$325.33 NZD), if repaid in one year, can be followed by a loan of 60,000 rupees (\$650.65 NZD) that has two years to be returned. VisionFund also monitors the impact of the loans on the community using the Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI), which tracks the child well-being indicators of the recipient family, and the growth of the livelihood or business in

question. This sustained involvement in the micro-credit process not only allows VisionFund to constantly evaluate the status of the loans, but also provides the opportunity to go out into the community to find more potential recipients. Overall, the goal of VisionFund to provide financial support to impoverished communities in the Jaffna District has had positive consequences for the job-seeking prospects of youth within the region, and their commitment to micro-credit provision is continuing to meet the organisation's goals and objectives:

“Our mission is to improve the lives of people living in poverty; the lives of their children, the young people, and communities where they live. Through providing micro-finance in Jaffna District we have been able to assist in the creation of sustainable livelihoods, provide education for children, and help alleviate the region's youth unemployment problem”. – Key Informant 10, (1st March, 2015).

The Pacific Asia Resource Centre Inter-People Cooperation (PARCIC) is a Japanese-based NGO that also recently implemented livelihood assistance and social development projects in Jaffna District, many of which have been successful in assisting the region's youth in obtaining employment. Since the end of the civil war, PARCIC has made a concerted effort to assist in the post-conflict development process through the provision of livelihood support to returning IDPs, particularly in Jaffna District's at-risk fishing communities (Pirapakaran & Nishimori, 2013). PARCIC's philosophy of providing no grants or micro-credit, but instead only leased materials and livelihood training, is designed to foster independence as soon as possible for the IDP families in question. For example, in 2010 PARCIC began providing fiberglass boats, engines, and high quality fishing equipment to several fishing communities, through a project which saw the repayments for this equipment go to the local Fisherman's Cooperative Society rather than back to PARCIC (Pirapakaran & Nishimori, 2013). According to a PARCIC employee:

“By having to pay for the new livelihood technologies, we hope the recipients will value those products far higher, and as a result they will see an increase in self-reliance and community development. With the repayments also going to the local Fishing Cooperative Society, we believe that the potential isolation faced by some fishing families will be lessened. These FCS's have proven to be invaluable in helping communities achieve economic sustainability and food security” – Key Informant 33, (31st March, 2015).

Despite the fact that, like VisionFund, none of PARCIC's other projects, which include livelihood creation schemes like the 'Recycle Sari Project' and the social enterprise 'Dry Fish

Project’, are directly targeting youth in their implementation, PARCIC believe that all their programmes provide chances for business and community development that translate into increased employment opportunities for young people (Pirapakaran & Nishimori, 2013). Because of PARCIC’s development pedigree as a well-funded international NGO, several fishing communities in Jaffna District have been able to benefit from visits from various Japanese livelihood specialists, who have provided training for techniques such as hygienic fish preservation and aqua-farming. Through courses such as these, youth workers especially have been able to gain skills and experience which shall assist in the creation of their own livelihoods, and hopefully translate into business creation, sustainable livelihoods, and greater youth engagement among fishing communities.

The German Development Cooperation (GIZ) has become increasingly involved in the development of Sri Lanka since the cessation of the three-decade long civil war, culminating in the implementation of the project “Vocational Training in the North of Sri Lanka” (VTN) in 2010, a youth directed needs-oriented training programme which saw the creation of a new vocational training institute in Kilinochchi (Kilinochchi District, Northern Province) (GIZ Sri Lanka, 2011). This facility, the Sri Lankan German Training Institute (SLGTI), while located outside Jaffna District, has provided another potential destination for young people to gain vocational training inside the Northern Province. GIZ recognises that:

“...Opportunities for education within the formal or informal sectors are extremely limited. And since 2009 GIZ has played a key role in the promotion of vocational training in the region, hopefully improving young people’s prospects of productive employment.” – Key Informant 21, (24th March, 2015).

The SLGTI has made a special effort to reach out to secondary school leavers, unemployed and young people particularly affected by the civil war. Through the engagement of these most at-risk youth, it is hoped the Institute will foster peace-building, social integration and development (see Fig.22) (GIZ Sri Lanka, 2011). GIZ conducted a labour market survey in March 2012 in five more Sri Lankan Districts, including Jaffna District, to identify the potential for further creation of training centres and courses that will suit regional industry needs. This survey coincided with the completion of basic automotive and electronics training by the first 30 graduates of SLGTI, the hope being that these graduates will be able to find jobs within these trades or establish businesses in their own communities (GIZ Sri Lanka, 2011). While the work of GIZ may not have yet been directly located within Jaffna District, a significant number of young people have travelled to Kilinochchi to study at SLGTI, and with the potential for

further training courses and centres being located within Jaffna District, the work of GIZ could yield more youth employment benefits. Overall, the work of education of and vocational training based schemes by the GIZ provide excellent opportunities for young people in the post-conflict period to gain not only employable skills, but also qualifications that will allow them to create their own businesses, and become vital employers in the community.

Figure 22: Students at Sri Lankan-German Training Institute in Kilinochchi (SLGTI).



Source: GIZ Sri Lanka (2011)

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has maintained a presence in Sri Lanka for several decades, however, its presence was significantly extended following the December 2004 Tsunami and after the end of the Civil War in 2009. In 2013, the SDC created its “Swiss Cooperation Strategy 2013-2015 for Sri Lanka”, which stated its goals of inclusive peace-building and sustainable development, particularly in the war-torn Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. The issue of rehabilitating returning IDPs is an area in which SDC has been particularly important in Jaffna District. With access to clean drinking water still being a major challenge for many in the Northern Province, particularly the resettled families, the SDC made the access to water a key focus in 2014 (SDC Sri Lanka, 2013). Due to the widespread view of young people within IDP communities to be seen as potentially hostile or catalysts of instability (Izzi, 2013), the focus placed on rehabilitation and engagement of recently settled IDPs by the SDC in the Northern Province hopefully allows for youth members in those communities to become more involved in their new surroundings, and seek meaningful employment.

Overall, the work of international NGOs within Jaffna District has resulted in both direct and indirect benefits for the youth of the region as they seek employment. For decades,

international non-governmental development organisations have played key roles in the development of Sri Lanka, particularly in areas of education, employment and environmental sustainability. It is hoped that through the continuation of such work, with specific emphasis being placed on young people in Jaffna District, the various issues associated with the serious youth unemployment can be mitigated.

6.5. Conclusion

The number and variety of developmental actors and programmes working in Jaffna District to reduce the extent of the region's youth unemployment problem has greatly increased since the cessation of violence in 2009. The types, which can be broadly categorised into three groups (Educational institutions, Community-based vocational training initiatives, and International NGOs), have implemented various strategies and programmes designed to improve employment and community involvement among young people in Jaffna District. Since the end of the civil war, the region's educational institutions have been attempting to create a new generation of well-educated, highly skilled, and employable young people. However, as stated above, there are still many restricting factors on this process, with the quality of the education provided, the lack of positions available at each educational institution, and the social perception of different careers, being three of the many reasons why these educational institutions face a difficult task. Similarly, the community-based organisations working in Jaffna District, whether national bodies or local Jaffna groups, have begun providing vocational training and educational funding for young people in earnest since the end of the civil war. It is hoped that through their work in encouraging community ownership of the education and employment process, these organisations shall be able to provide a connection between unemployed youths and long-term employment. Finally, the work of international NGOs within Jaffna District has resulted in direct and indirect benefits for the youth of the region as they seek employment. These actors, particularly the community-based and international NGOs, have attempted to fill the gap left by the lack of educational and development support from the Sri Lankan government during the post-conflict reconstruction process. It is hoped that through the continuation of such work, with specific emphasis being placed on young people in Jaffna District, the various issues associated with mass youth unemployment can be mitigated.

Having explained both the current youth unemployment situation in Jaffna District (see Chapter 5), and the strategies currently being employed by various actors to eliminate the causes

of this structural problem (Chapter 6), the following chapter will examine the future prospects for youth employment and engagement within the region. Due to the propensity of high youth employment to result in an effective post-conflict development process (Izzi, 2013), the elimination of the severe youth unemployment within the District is key to its future political stability and economic success.

7. Prospects for youth in Jaffna District

Youth employment as a key to political stability and economic success

7.1. Introduction

It is evident from current literature that the post-conflict development process within Jaffna District is facing many political, social and economic obstacles. The prevalence of youth unemployment has been shown throughout this study to be one of the most disruptive issues in the reconstruction and development of the region. As shown in the previous chapter, a variety of strategies are being put in place by a range of actors to mitigate this serious youth unemployment problem, so as to prevent future potential unrest and instability, and to engage the next generation in the creation of thriving post-conflict communities. With the many writers of youth and conflict literature regarding idle young people as direct challenges to successful post-war peacebuilding (Goldstone, 2001), the attempts to engage young people in meaningful employment is viewed as having the dual benefit of improving post-conflict development, and preventing future unrest in the region. However, the success of the current strategies for youth unemployment in Jaffna District may depend on a series of future political, cultural and economic decisions (Gunatilaka, Mayer & Vovopivec, 2010). The future political autonomy of the Northern Province, the levels of future financial investment in the Jaffna District, and the restrictive nature of Tamil society for young people, are all potential factors that could greatly impact upon the ability of youth to find employment and fully engage in the development process (Wickramasinghe, 2014). These issues are on a much larger geographic scale and are far more complex, meaning that the solutions are going to potentially require significant structural changes to the political, socio-cultural and economic make-up of Jaffna District. With the potential devolution of the Northern province from the national Sri Lankan government, the growth in Chinese and Indian investment in Sri Lanka, and the increasing accessibility to new ideas for young people as a result of technology, the future of Jaffna District could be radically different from the war-time and early post-conflict periods.

7.2. Political reconciliation or separation?

As a result of the 27 years of civil war and the perceived lack of national assistance in the post-conflict development processes, deep-seated mistrust and resentment occur between

the Tamil-majority of the Northern Province, and the Sinhalese majority national government (Chang, 2014). This engrained ethnic tension has not significantly decreased in the intervening six years since the cessation of violence in 2009, for a variety of reasons; the violent nature of the war's conclusion, the lack of a peace commission in the conflict's immediate aftermath (similar to post-Apartheid South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission), and the continued presence of the Sri Lankan Army forces throughout the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country. In late 1987, after the first four initial violent years of the civil war, the Sri Lankan parliament enacted the 13th Amendment to the nation's constitution which devolved large amounts of regional power to newly created 'Provincial Councils', which took control of practical matters involving land, policy and financial institutions in the nation's provinces. Much of the Tamil population, under the leadership of the 'All Ceylon Tamil Congress' (see Fig.23), viewed the 13th Amendment as the beginning of Northern Province's eventual devolution and self-autonomy, however, this has never occurred. Following the end of the civil war, the Northern Province was ruled directly from Colombo until elections for the Provincial Council were finally held in September 2013, with the Tamil National Alliance gaining 30 of 38 seats (including 14 of 16 representing Jaffna District) (Slee, 2015). Now, in

Figure 23: Flag of 'All Ceylon Tamil Congress', Sri Lanka's oldest Tamil political party (Symbol of Tamil Nationalism).



Source: allceylontamilcongress.svg, (access date: Sept 7th, 2015)

the aftermath of the atrocities that concluded the civil war, the slow post-conflict development process under former President Rajapaksa, and the recent election of the perceived Liberal, Maithripala Sirisena, as the nation's leader in January 2015, calls for increased autonomy for

the Northern Province have once again come to the fore among the Tamil speaking population of the North (Sivakumar, 2013; Wickramasinghe, 2014). Greater devolution of power from the central Sri Lankan government to the Northern Provincial Council is supported as a compromise to the violent demands for complete separation made by Tamil nationalists during the conflict period (Sivakumar, 2013). This desire for Tamil autonomy was embodied by many interviewees, including Key Informant 20:

“When I leave Sri Lanka, I still do not call myself a Sri Lankan. I say I am Tamil. I do not believe my people are represented by the works of the Sri Lankan government”
– Key Informant 20, (16th March, 2015).

This potential movement towards Northern Province devolution places the post-conflict development process, and as a result, the continued work to eradicate vast youth unemployment, in an uncertain position. If the Northern Provincial Council does become the sole governing body in the region, it is likely that development will be able to occur in a more targeted and coherent manner, however, the Tamil people will likely lose much of their current access to the greater resource wealth located in the southern regions of the country. Strategies for youth employment will likely continue throughout Jaffna District regardless of any shift in governance structure, however, the effectiveness of such strategies may be significantly altered. While the prospect of devolution remains a pertinent issue in the post-conflict development process, many of the key factors creating the ‘structural’ nature of the youth unemployment problems are more as a result of the lack of post-conflict investment in the District’s industries and infrastructure, and the restrictive socio-cultural environment which young Tamils experience.

7.3. Future investment in the Jaffna District?

As we have seen earlier, Jaffna District faces great difficulty in its process of post-conflict development, due to the lack of viable industries following the extended periods of violence, destruction, and isolation during the Sri Lankan civil war. This lack of vibrant manufacturing, agriculture, or resource extraction industries, has meant that the large amounts of foreign investment that have occurred throughout other regions of Sri Lanka since the end of the conflict, has not reached the northern periphery of the country. The world’s growing industrial powers, China and India, began to invest heavily in the Sri Lankan economy under former President Rajapaksa’s aggressively neo-liberal economic policy (2005-2015) (DeVotta, 2013), the majority of which was based around infrastructural improvements. The reduction of

aid by western governments, due to various allegations of human rights violations in the aftermath of the civil war's conclusion, contributed to further strengthening Sri Lanka's relations with China, with Rajapaksa using both Chinese financing and labour to assist in the construction of the nation's first major expressway between Colombo and Galle (Dissanayake, 2014). India has also greatly increased its investment in Sri Lanka since 2009, with two Indian companies playing a key role in the completion of the Colombo to Jaffna Railway, which was opened in October 2014 (see Fig.24) (Tortajada & Biswas, 2015).

Figure 24: The first train arrives at the new Jaffna railway station, October 2014.



Source: www.indiatoday.in, (access date: June 8th, 2015)

Most of the investment in Sri Lanka from these Asian powers has been directed towards the nation's infrastructure, something which Jaffna District desperately needs. With the majority of roads still unpaved, the transportation of goods is a time-consuming process, while Jaffna District is still affected by an unreliable power supply (Amirthalingam & Lakshman, 2015). These infrastructural issues prevent potential investors viewing Jaffna District as an appealing base for future industry, despite the region's longstanding record of high academic achievement and surplus labour supply (Cooray, 2014). These sentiments were echoed by many community-based employment initiatives:

“If we are unable to create an environment where businesses can be created and be successful, then the majority of young people we train will be forced to leave the Jaffna District in order to get good jobs, as they are already doing. This could have a terrible impact on the community's future. Every day our youth go to Dubai and Qatar and other

places. While they send back money, it is their skills and talents we need.” – Key Informant 32, (29th March, 2015).

While unemployment is viewed as an obvious problem in Jaffna District’s post-conflict development process, this concept of ‘lost labour’, as people move outside of Sri Lanka to seek employment, is also a concern for many in the region (Dissanayake, 2014). The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora is now estimated to include 1 million people scattered around the world, with the largest concentrations in Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, the USA, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and the UAE (Kadirgamar, 2009; George, 2011; Slee, 2015). While the greatest number of Tamils left Sri Lanka during the civil war for security reasons, the frequency at which young Jaffna District residents are attempting to migrate to both Western and Middle Eastern nations is viewed with great concern by policy-makers in the Northern Province. Foreign language providers in Jaffna District, such as the British Council and Alliance Française, are actively providing courses to young people looking to upskill before emigrating:

“The majority of my clientele are young women who are studying French for 6 months to 1 year, before travelling to France to live with their family or new husbands, who are Tamil migrants or refugees who have left already. Many of these are illegal immigrants who have been able to subsequently claim asylum, they make their way to France typically through a lengthy journey via Benin and Togo... Only a small number of people learn French to stay in Jaffna - these are typically hospitality people from the Northern and Eastern Provinces who are seeking to gain language certificates to assist in getting job promotions...” – Key Informant 18, (22th March, 2015).

While many wish to one day go and join their family members abroad, policy-makers within the Northern Provincial Council and Jaffna District Secretariat are attempting to reduce the emigration of young people in search of employment, believing that although many are still unemployed they provide the key potential labour force that will be able to successfully redevelop the region if the proper measures and structures are put in place (Chang, 2014). Attempts are also being made to encourage members of the Tamil diaspora to return to the region now that the war has concluded, as, although the remittances that have been received over recent decades have been crucial in maintaining a standard of living within areas such as Jaffna District, now that the war has concluded it is the skills, expertise and entrepreneurial abilities of the diaspora which would be particularly valuable in the post-conflict development process (Kadirgamar, 2009; Slee, 2015). The defeat of President Rajapaksa in the January 2015

elections, a seemingly unthinkable result only a few months before, has been viewed by many Tamils as a potential catalyst for the improvement of their minority status throughout Sri Lanka (Tortajada & Biswas, 2015). With newly elected president, Maithripala Sirisena, immediately accusing the Rajapaksa family of leading the country ‘towards a dictatorship’ through systematic corruption and nepotism throughout the economy, military and key political power structures, many in the Northern Province hope to see the return of many members of the Tamil diaspora, particularly those from the Middle East, who are typically faced by unregulated labour conditions and systematised discrimination (Robinson, 2015). While the return of such large numbers of workers to regions such as Jaffna District may cause further inflation of the already overwhelmed labour markets, it is hoped that the returning migrants will bring entrepreneurial and developmental skills that will assist with livelihood upliftment and business creation within underdeveloped communities, and in time will see the creation of significant numbers of jobs for the large cohorts of young people experiencing now structural unemployment (see Fig.25).

Figure 25: Prominent figures within the Tamil diaspora based in the United Kingdom (James Coomarasamy – BBC Journalist; M.I.A – Rapper/Singer/Songwriter; Arjun Kumaraswamy – Singer/Songwriter).



Source: www.bbc.com, (access date: July 1st, 2015)

In many respects significant developmental change in the Northern Province, and consequently Jaffna District, is only likely to occur with the support of major investment from either the Sri Lankan government, or major international powers such as India and China (Tortajada & Biswas, 2015). A mass return to Jaffna District, and a dramatic increase in investment from the Tamil Diaspora, is unlikely, meaning that those who remain within the region must attempt to develop the region without relying on overseas based relatives providing significant portions of funding. While the implementation of small-scale community-based

vocational and livelihood training projects is providing a small number of employment opportunities for youth in Jaffna District, in order for large-scale employment to occur major investment is required.

7.4. Socio-cultural restriction or revolution?

As referred to in previous chapters, Sri Lanka's Tamil ethnic group engage in many social, cultural and religious practices that restrict the freedom of choice for young people. As the basis of the Tamil people's cultural identity and historical connection to their communities, protecting these uniquely Tamil values and customs was one of the reasons why the Sri Lankan civil war began, and was also a major reason why many of the communities were able to survive such an extended period of isolation and persecution during the war. These practices affect almost all aspects of life in Tamil households, with employment, marriage, socialising, and religious adherence being the most common areas of influence. Far beyond the extent of its influence on their Sinhalese counterparts, the Tamil population still utilise a 'caste-based' social stratification system, which is an influential factor in many social endeavours (Rao, 2010). The dominant Tamil caste of the Northern Province, the Vellala, find it far easier to take advantage of new economic and employment opportunities, unlike lower labouring castes, such as the Palla, who are largely associated with agricultural labouring, and face discrimination if they attempt to improve their socio-economic standing. Other research in South Asia nations, such as India and Nepal, has revealed (Rao, 2010) that the prevalence of a strong caste system is typically associated with slow development and entrenched poverty. Due to this social ordering according to employment, many opportunities for personal improvement are restricted to certain castes, and even in communal workplaces such as factories and business offices, people of different castes do not freely associate or talk with one another (Rao, 2010). Many within Jaffna District believe the prevalence of social constraints, such as caste, create undue barriers for young people:

'Youth don't make their own decisions, they have grown up in a society where the will of the community is more important than their own goals. For a young person in Jaffna, the community is often a centre of restriction, not support. It acts as a force preventing them from taking risks, instead of acting as a support system should these risks not work.' – Key Informant 30, (20th March, 2015).

These sentiments exemplify the significance of social, cultural and economic structures in Jaffna District, preventing young people within the community, particularly those from lower socio-economic or caste upbringings, from being able to easily improve their standing. This

dynamic relationship between exclusion and poverty is exacerbated as a result of the region's post-conflict development nature, and only through the relaxation of pre-existing social structures, and the bringing of the socially excluded into the mainstream, is poverty alleviation among the most disadvantaged likely to occur (Silva & Hettihewage, 2001). Without an amelioration of the engrained caste system, lower caste members will be unable to move up the career ladder, leading to entrenched employment discrimination and a perpetuation of the exclusion-poverty cycle (Rao, 2010).

While caste, and other social restrictions placed on many young people within Jaffna District, remain significant hindrances to youth gaining meaningful employment, several key informants believed that a number of factors affecting the post-conflict generation could bring about a 'social revolution' within previously restrictive communities. The increasing prevalence of modern technologies within Jaffna District, such as mobile phones and computers, is allowing young citizens to gain a greater appreciation of different cultures and ways of life throughout the world, potentially leading to a desire to change their own social structures and environment. As a result, many Tamil youth are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the potential opportunities provided in Jaffna District:

"Many young people in Jaffna are becoming restless with the restrictions of the Tamil culture. Young females are typically more conscientious and hardworking, but for boys, many of whom who have never had strong male role models because of the war, have become disengaged and uninterested in their community. Young people want more, and when they can see what is happening in other parts of Sri Lanka or the world, they become restless." – Key Informant 6, (27th February, 2015).

"Not being allowed to pursue love interests or life goals because of the castes they are in are major causes of youth suicide, which is an issue that has seen little attention in this region. Unbalanced young people have no counselling, or safe places to discuss their concerns." – Key Informant 30, (20th March, 2015).

The growth in the flow of outside information into the region as a result of technology is also compounded by communication between young Jaffna District residents and their family members living abroad as part of the Tamil diaspora. While the members of the Tamil community who departed the country due to the war have become immersed in western environments, those who have remained in areas such as Jaffna District have been limited by decades of isolation and conflict (Cochrane, Baser & Swain, 2009). This has resulted in a social system that is incredibly patriarchal and hierarchical, and continues to enforce the caste-based

societal organisation in Jaffna District, while members of the diaspora experience greater opportunities for social mobility. Diaspora communities are often known to play significant roles in the economic and political decision-making process of their homelands, but little is known of the cultural or societal impact that they can have on their former communities, particularly in the Sri Lankan context (Cochrane, Baser & Swain, 2009). The influence of the more liberal and egalitarian nature of the diaspora's way of life could lead to dramatic changes in the caste, class, religious and employment structures of the native Tamil communities. Such a shift could greatly improve employment opportunities for many of the District's youth, especially those of lower caste or social standing, who, despite their abilities would have previously been destined to lives of working in agriculture or manual labour-based industries (Gunatilaka, Mayer and Vodopivec, 2010). According to several Key Informants, the relaxation of the Tamil community's strict social norms would be hugely beneficial to the post-conflict development process, and would allow young people to flourish:

“There is a cautiousness and fear among older generations to break from traditions. Because the Tamil culture was what the separatists were trying to empower and preserve during the war there is an unwillingness to modernise if it contradicts historic norms. This results in an inability to use initiative, a trait that must not be passed on to the next generation. Risk-takers, innovators and entrepreneurs are needed if the North is going to recover from the war” – Key Informant 18, (22nd March, 2015).

The importance of allowing young people more freedom to take risks and engage in new thought-processes is regarded by some as the key to a growth in next generation entrepreneurship, and as a result, the successful post-conflict development in Sri Lanka's northern extremities. According to Sarvananthan (2011), the dependence of Sri Lankans based in the northern areas of the country on foreign aid, non-governmental assistance, and private foreign remittances, has gone beyond a threshold where the perceived benefits become counterproductive, and are even disruptive for the process of post-conflict economic revival. Anecdotal evidence acquired during this field research supports this belief, with various forms of foreign relief and private remittances, while important to the survival of citizens in Jaffna District both during and immediately after the civil war, are now perpetuating a culture of dependence, and are potentially stifling the growth of entrepreneurship (Jebarajakirthy, Lobo & Hewege, 2014; Sarvananthan, 2011). Therefore, it is potentially only through the breaking of historic cultural norms and traditions, such as the patriarchal and hierarchical social ordering fostered by the caste system, that young people in Jaffna District will be afforded the opportunity to create new avenues for employment and development.

7.5. Conclusion

Jaffna District is currently at a unique crossroads in its post-conflict development process. With significant development problems created by the civil war still apparent (such as vast youth unemployment), the region is faced with a series of political, economic and social issues that could help or hinder the development of the District. The potential for greater political autonomy for the Northern Province could hypothetically play both a positive and a negative role in the development process, with the many benefits of Northern Provincial Council self-governance being counterbalanced by the future lack of assistance and coordination with the national Sri Lankan government. The need for serious investment in industry and infrastructure, whether from foreign powers or the national government, is also an area of potential progress in the post-conflict development process, and would likely have vast impacts on levels of youth unemployment. However, Jaffna District must create an environment of political and ethnic harmony, community collaboration, and high-skilled employment if it is to entice future investment in new industries. Finally, a major factor in the potential for greater youth engagement and employment in Jaffna District is the relaxation of some characteristics of Tamil culture, particularly those surrounding the caste system. The restrictive nature of enforced social structures prevents young people pursuing life-goals because of the socio-economic background they grew up in, leading to a stifling of risk-taking, entrepreneurship and social mobility. Jaffna District is entering a key phase in its post-conflict development process, and through the reduction of the serious youth unemployment issues, it is likely to have a far greater opportunity at achieving sustained political and economic growth and development.

8. Conclusion

8.1. Key research questions answered

This research has investigated the extent to which youth unemployment has become an important issue within Jaffna District, and how this affects the region's ongoing post-conflict development process. Through the examination of post-conflict scenarios, and the issues associated with high youth unemployment in the northern region of Sri Lanka, this research has been able to break new ground within this field of study, and has built upon the limited existing literature surrounding these topics. Jaffna District has provided a unique and dynamic case study, and has been the perfect location to provide a focus on youth unemployment. As previously stated, although post-conflict literature has become increasingly abundant in recent decades, it has typically failed to address the key factor of youth employment and engagement in the post-conflict development process, particularly in the Sri Lankan context. This has often meant a lack of action to solve the issues from policymakers both within Sri Lanka, and in other post-conflict settings around the world.

The timeliness of this research is demonstrated by the reference to the importance of youth employment opportunities within development in the UN's 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) (Lu *et al*, 2015). Section 4.4 of the recently released SDGs (September 2015) states the goal of "substantially increasing the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship" (United Nations, 2015). It is hoped therefore, that this research will assist in paving the way for further investigation into the importance of youth employment and engagement in a post-conflict environment, and a greater understanding of the prevalence of the issue in Jaffna District that may result in some effective coordinated strategies.

The following three research questions were used to guide the research process. The key results of each question will be outlined below;

1. What is the extent of the 'youth' unemployment issue in post-conflict Jaffna District?

This question was designed to be wide-reaching in nature, so that both primary and secondary sources could be incorporated to investigate the extent of youth unemployment experienced in the region. This question was addressed in Chapter Five, which highlighted some of the conditions that have caused youth unemployment to manifest into such a significant issue, such as; the significance of the post-conflict environment, youth unemployment's 'structural' nature, and the potentially negative influence of remittances from the Tamil

diaspora. As fieldwork was able to show, these factors have combined to create a youth unemployment situation that contains a fundamental mismatch between the availability of desirable jobs, and the large numbers of young people who are seeking employment.

2. How is the issue of 'youth' unemployment in post-conflict Jaffna District being addressed?

Chapter Six was able to establish the ways in which youth employment problems in Jaffna District have been viewed, and what attempts are being made to address them. In order to do this, an investigation needs to be undertaken into the strategies being carried out by educational institutions, community-based vocational training initiatives, and international NGOs. Since the end of the civil war, these groups have attempted to mitigate the various issues associated with mass youth unemployment through strategies and programmes designed to improve employment and community involvement among young people in Jaffna District. In a post-conflict region that has historically been dependent on the primary sector (agriculture and fishing), the ability of youth employment schemes to promote higher education, entrepreneurship, a diverse array of skills, as well as incorporating new technologies into current livelihoods, is seen by many as crucial to the post-conflict development of local communities.

3. What are the key factors affecting the future of 'youth' engagement and employment in Jaffna District?

This final research question was addressed in Chapter Seven, with important issues associated with the future of youth participation in growth and development in Jaffna District being discussed. The potential for greater political autonomy for the Northern Province, the need for greater investment in industry and infrastructure within the District, and the unique nature of Tamil culture, were all explored in depth. With significant development problems created by the civil war still apparent, Jaffna District is faced with a series of political, economic and social issues that could both help or hinder the development of the District. The explanation of some of these issues helped to address the role that youth might play in the future of this development process.

8.2. Recommendations and possible future research

The overarching goal of this thesis has been to examine the extent to which the post-conflict development process in Jaffna District is being hindered by the mass youth unemployment being experienced in the region. The dynamic relationship of these two concepts has been proven to be apparent, with the District's recent history of conflict being a significant contributor to the region's youth unemployment, while the sustained nature of the conflict was demonstrated to have been aided by the area's widespread youth unemployment. Jaffna District is currently at a unique crossroads in its post-conflict reconstruction, and significant development issues, such as youth unemployment, present significant problems in an already troubled region. As a result of the analysis conducted in this research, several recommendations can be made concerning policies that might potentially be implemented within Jaffna District:

- ✚ For the deep-seated distrust and resentment to subside between the Tamil and Sinhalese populations associated with the decades of conflict, an all-encompassing attempt at ethnic reconciliation needs to occur within the country. A restorative justice body, such as South Africa's post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission, would provide all parties with an opportunity to discuss human rights violations committed during the lengthy civil conflict, hopefully leading to forgiveness, and a greater mutual understanding between the different ethnicities. Only through such a wide ranging reconciliation process can the country hope to move forward as a united entity, and the post-conflict development process be both successful and sustainable.
- ✚ Another act that would greatly assist in the reduction of Tamil distrust for the Sri Lankan Government would be the removal of the national military, and the related High Security Zones, from the Northern Province. Not only does the Sri Lankan army, and its arbitrary areas of restriction, occupy valuable land throughout the District that could be better utilised in the development process, but the very presence of them as symbols of the bitter conflict serves as a constant reminder of the violence that the region has suffered. The population of Jaffna District is dispirited and war-weary, and despite government suggestions to the contrary, the military presence does not serve a peacekeeping purpose, but instead attempts to control the movements of the defeated Tamil population. The removal of all but the most necessary military forces from Jaffna District, would greatly assist in rebuilding trust between the different ethnic groups, and allow for a smoother post-conflict development process.
- ✚ In order to create graduates with the required skills to compete in an increasingly global environment, and to drive the further development and growth of Jaffna District, the

educational facilities within the region must place greater emphasis on developing certain skills; such as, oral communication, entrepreneurship, critical-thinking, and leadership. Many young Tamils are restricted by their socio-economic situation, their religion and societal expectations. In order to stimulate a growth in independent thought and risk-taking, the educational institutions must place an emphasis on such skills. An increase in graduates with such abilities should lead to greater development of industries, which in turn should greatly assist in the post-conflict development of the region, and associated issues such as reducing youth unemployment.

- ✚ An immediate influx of investment for new industrial and infrastructural development would provide valuable job opportunities for many of Jaffna District's unemployed youths. Such a surge in investment would likely need to come from the Sri Lankan national government, and/or a major international donor, and would require detailed planning. The potential benefits of major works within this post-conflict setting would be numerous, particularly for those attempting to gain employment in this war-torn region.
- ✚ Finally, despite the popularity of potentially greater autonomy being experienced by the Northern Provincial Council, and as a result Jaffna District, the possible benefits of such devolution are far outweighed by the potential costs. For the Northern and Eastern regions of Sri Lanka to recover from the devastation of the civil war these provinces will require significant investment and support from the national government over a considerable period of time. While the desire of Tamil people to legislate and govern their own provinces is understandable, the access to financing and resources provided by the Sri Lanka government cannot be underestimated, particularly for regions that are still undergoing significant post-conflict development. As a result, the greater devolution of power to the Northern Provincial Council, while a positive initiative for peace-building and ethnic cooperation in Sri Lanka, may not actually prove to be a beneficial decision in terms of potential future investment and support for the post-conflict development of the region.

Despite successfully addressing this investigation's research questions, there are many areas within the complexity of post-conflict and youth unemployment discourses that could be researched within the context of development and peace-building in Sri Lanka. Such future research could address:

- ✚ Jaffna District is just one of five administrative districts within the Northern Province, all of which were significantly affected by the civil war, and all of which face their own issues with youth unemployment. The Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu Districts experienced far more destruction in the final stages of the conflict, and as a result have experienced a much greater amount of upheaval. Field research and data collection would be far more challenging processes within these two districts than was experienced during this research project, but the potential results of such an investigation could have a positive effect in shaping the post-conflict development process being undertaken.
- ✚ A similar research project in another post-conflict setting would also be useful as a comparative study. Such a study could assess the possible wider applicability of the findings from this research, and could discover whether similar patterns, processes and issues are occurring. While the specific context of this study means that direct comparisons should be avoided, post-conflict development processes in African countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, and Sierra Leone, could provide useful locations for similar research.

These are just some of a number of possible research projects that could build upon the work undertaken in this investigation. The University of Jaffna, and other research bodies in Sri Lanka, are eager to develop collaborative research links with other academic institutions, and in this period of post-conflict development such links could be particularly useful to the growth and success of this country and its war-torn regions.

In conclusion, this thesis has attempted to provide a detailed investigation of the how youth unemployment has become an important issue within post-conflict Jaffna District, how various actors are working together to solve related problems, and the potential social, political and economic benefits that solving this issue could have on the region's future development. Through an examination of post-conflict scenarios, and the issues associated with high youth unemployment in the northern region of Sri Lanka, this project has endeavoured to increase both the awareness and focus on youth employment issues in Jaffna District, whilst demonstrating the crucial importance of encouraging an engaged and inspired youth population in a post-conflict development situation.

9. References

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10. Appendix

10.1 - Appendix 1: Human Ethics Application



UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE APPLICATION FORM: CATEGORY A

Form updated: May 2014

Please ensure you are using the latest application form template available from: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/council/committees/committees/HumanEthicsCommittees.html> and read the instruction documents provided (Guidelines for Ethical Practices in Teaching and Research and Filling Out Your Human Ethics Application).

1. University of Otago staff member responsible for project:

<i>Surname</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Title (Mr/Ms/Mrs/Dr/Assoc. Prof./Prof.)</i>
Binns	Tony	Prof.

2. Department/School:

Geography

3. Contact details of staff member responsible (always include your email address):

Professor J A (Tony) Binns
Ron Lister Chair of Geography
Department of Geography
University of Otago
PO Box 56
Dunedin 9001
New Zealand

Room 4C19
Richardson Building

Email jab@geography.otago.ac.nz
Tel 64 3 479 5356
Fax 64 3 479 9037

4. Title of project:

Youth Employment: The Key to Future Political and Economic Sustainability in a Post-conflict country? A Case Study in Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka.

5. Indicate project type and names of other investigators and students:

Staff Co-investigators ☐ N Names:

NA

Student Researchers ☐ Y Names:

Gilbert Bowden

Level of Study (PhD, Masters, Hons):

Masters

External Researchers ☐ Y Names:

Dr. Gamini Ranasinghe
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Institute/Company:

6. Is this a repeated class teaching activity? (Delete answer that does not apply)

NO

If YES and this application is to continue a previously approved repeated class teaching activity, provide Reference Number:

NA

7. Fast-Track procedure (Delete answer that does not apply)

Do you request fast-track consideration? (See 'Filling Out Your Human Ethics Application')

NO

8. When will recruitment and data collection commence?

Late February 2015 (exact travel dates still to be confirmed)

When will data collection be completed?

Late March 2015 (exact travel dates still to be confirmed)

9. Funding of project

Is the project to be funded by an external grant?

NO

If YES, specify who is funding the project:

NA

If commercial use will be made of the data, will potential participants be made aware of this before they agree to participate? If not, explain:

No commercial use will be made of data collected by this project.

10. Brief description in lay terms of the purpose of the project (approx. 75 words):

This research project aims to critically analyse the link between youth employment and the economic and political sustainability of the post-conflict nation of Sri Lanka. Historically, youth unemployment, particularly in post-conflict settings, has been seen as a major cause of societal and political unrest. The Sri Lankan government has undertaken an ambitious program of development projects since the cessation of the 30-year long civil war, and while this process has been successful in increasing economic growth, it has not addressed many of the societal and political problems. Discontent and disillusionment among youth is regarded as a potential threat to the economic and political stability of the country during its recovery phase, and only through the active employment and engagement of Sri Lanka's youth population can the threat of a resurgence in instability be eliminated.

11. Aim and description of project (*include the research questions the project intends to answer, and the overall implications and benefits of the research*):

Following independence in 1973, simmering ethnic tension between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil separatists erupted into war in 1983, leading to almost three decades of fighting between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan government (1983-2009). As in the majority of conflicts, the youth population of Sri Lanka bore the majority of the war's casualties, while the lengthy conflict also contributed to the emergence of civil discontent amongst youth. While the ethnic nature of Sri Lanka's civil war has received large amounts of academic attention since the cessation of violence in 2009, the youth development perspective of the conflict remains far less explored. Peacebuilding initiatives undertaken by the Sri Lankan government have also predominantly focused on the conflict's ethnic and minority rights elements, however, to neglect the youth aspect of the unrest could prove hugely detrimental to the future economic and political sustainability. This research will explore the significance of the youth demographic within the post-conflict peacebuilding and development programme which is underway in the Sri Lankan City of Jaffna. It will also investigate the strategies implemented by government institutions, civil society associations, and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to address youth employment issues, and the key priorities for youth engagement and employment in the future.

The key issues which will be examined are;

4. *What is the significance of the 'Youth' demographic in Sri Lanka's economy and society (with particular reference to Jaffna and the Northern Province)?*
5. *What strategies have been introduced in the Sri Lankan city of Jaffna during the initial post-conflict recovery period to reduce 'Youth' unemployment?*
6. *What should be the key priorities for future 'Youth' engagement and employment in Sri Lanka (with particular reference to Jaffna and the Northern Province)?*

The data collection component of this research process will be undertaken in the northern Sri Lankan city of Jaffna during February and March of 2015. Jaffna has been selected as the key research location for this study due to two factors. First, the city's prominence in the Sri Lanka civil war as a stronghold of the LTTE means that it is undergoing a dramatic post-conflict reconstruction process. Secondly, due to the influx of refugees and internally displaced peoples

(IDPs) the city's labour market is near capacity, leading to the inevitable increase in youth unemployment and disaffection.

This project will use a methodology that draws heavily on participatory qualitative practice. 'Participatory Methodologies' will be utilised to ensure that research leads to an understanding of the local capacities, knowledge and concepts, which shape the youth employment situation within Sri Lanka's post-conflict context. The field research will be carried out using a mixture of semi-structured interviews, focus groups and key informant surveys. A list of interview topics can be found in Appendix 1 of this application. These selected tools, and the methodologies described, have been drawn and adapted from the works of Chambers (1983) and Cornwall (2006).

Overall, this project will endeavour to increase the awareness and focus on youth employment issues in the Jaffna, and will hopefully demonstrate the crucial importance of an engaged and inspired youth population in a post-conflict development strategy.

Key References

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12. Researcher/instructor experience and qualifications in this research area (include information regarding the principal investigator (or supervisor), co-investigators and students (if relevant) involved with the project):

Professor Tony Binns has a 40 year record of research in many developing countries. He has published extensively on the subjects of development, sustainable livelihoods and urban agriculture. Many of these publications have been in reference to development within the post-conflict setting of Sierra Leone, while he has also supervised a PhD focused on 'cultural capital' in Sri Lanka. During his field research he has built up a wide range of contacts within Sri Lanka, both at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Colombo, and the University of Jaffna.

Student researcher, Gilbert Bowden, has completed both a BA in Geography and Postgraduate Diploma endorsed in History at the University of Otago. He has undertaken several research projects that involved interviewing sensitive communities as part of his Geography qualification. During the 2nd semester of 2013 Gilbert undertook a University Exchange to Denmark and travelled extensively through Europe. This gives him relevant experience in the challenges of travelling throughout different countries and adjusting to different cultures.

Dr. Gamini Ranasinghe is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History and Archaeology at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. His research has covered many topics relating to both prehistoric and contemporary history, including 'intangible heritage in Nurwarakalaviya, North Central Province, Sri Lanka'. Dr. Ranasinghe has assisted Prof. Binns during previous research ventures in Sri Lanka, and is willing to be an active participant in this research project. Dr Ranasinghe has extensive knowledge of the Northern Province and has strong links with the University of Jaffna.

13. Participants

13(a) Population from which participants are drawn: The majority of participants for this project will be young people who are marginalised or unemployed in Jaffna, and members of government institutions and NGOs attempting to implement strategies to address the employment and engagement issues. Involvement from community leaders (such as religious groups) and relevant service providers (the University of Jaffna) will also be sought.

13(b) Inclusion and exclusion criteria: The research focuses predominantly on youth experiences within the post-conflict development in Jaffna, so most participants will be members of society aged 18-30. Some older interviewees will be required from the government institutions and NGOs to provide a contrast and range of experiences. All respondents will be adults over the age of 18. Participants will be asked to participate in voluntary exercises and interviews. Once identified participants will be able to decline to participate at any stage of the activity or interview.

13(c) Estimated number of participants: The exact number of key informants is not yet known, but it is anticipated that at least 20 interviews will be conducted. These will primarily involve key knowledge holders or actors within the community. In addition to this, many members of the youth population, in particular students at the University of Jaffna, and unemployed youths working with NGOs, will be invited to participate in a range of activities designed to stimulate the sharing of experiences. Some 100 participants will be sought for these exercises (Focus Groups and Surveys), and participants will be able to withdraw at any time.

13(d) Age range of participants:

All participants will be over 18 years of age.

13(e) Method of recruitment:

Contacts made through Tony Binns and Gamini Ranasinghe at the University of Jaffna will be used to identify key informants within the Jaffna community and service providers. Snowball sampling will be used to expand the number of key participants and community members will be invited and encouraged to contribute, to whatever extent they feel comfortable.

13(f) Specify and justify any payment or reward to be offered (*Refer to 13f of the Filling In Your Application document*):

There will be no payment or reward offered.

14. Methods and Procedures: (*Describe the design of the study and detail what participants will be asked to do. Provide the Committee with a copy of the interview questions to be asked of participants, or a general outline if the questions are not yet available.*)

This research design will include a combination of semi-structured interviews with key informants, focus groups and experience-based surveys. Appendix 1 contains a list of key topics that will be covered within these data collection methods.

Where permission has been granted, interviews will be audio-recorded. Transcripts from the interviews will be analysed thematically through description, coding, classification and the categorisation of responses. Interviewees will be advised that their responses will remain confidential, that they will not be identifiable in the thesis or subsequent published papers. Any participants may decide not to take part in the project at any time without any disadvantage to themselves of any kind.

15. Compliance with The Privacy Act 1993 and the Health Information Privacy Code 1994 imposes strict requirements concerning the collection, use and disclosure of personal information. The questions below allow the Committee to assess compliance.

15(a) Are you collecting and storing personal information (e.g.name, contact details, designation, position etc) directly from the individual concerned that could identify the individual? (*Delete the answer that does not apply.*)

YES. In specific instances, and with participant permission, the role or position of key informants in bodies such as local government or NGOs may be recorded.

15(b) Are you collecting information about individuals from another source?

NO

15(c) Collecting Personal Information (*Delete the answer that does not apply*):

- Will you be collecting personal information (e.g. name, contact details, position, company, anything that could identify the individual)?

YES. See above

- Will you inform participants of the purpose for which you are collecting the information and the uses you propose to make of it?

YES

- Will you inform participants of who will receive the information?

YES

- Will you inform participants of the consequences, if any, of not supplying the information?

YES

- Will you inform participants of their rights of access to and correction of personal information?

YES

Where the answer is YES, make sure the information is included in the Information Sheet for Participants.

If you are NOT informing them of the points above, please explain why:

15(d) Outline your data storage, security procedures and length of time data will be kept (*Mark Borrie, ITS Security Manager, can provide data security and storage options in particular while in the field*):

The data will be stored on the researcher's university computer login profile. This has a secure password protected log-in. Hardcopy data will be stored in a locked cabinet in Prof. Binns' office at the University of Otago. This information will be kept for five years then destroyed by the researcher as per University requirements.

15(e) Who will have access to personal information, under what conditions, and subject to what safeguards? If you are obtaining information from another source, include details of how this will be accessed and include written permission if appropriate. Will participants have access to the information they have provided?

Participants will be informed of their ability to request a copy of the completed research project prior to consent. Outside of this access to the information will be limited to Gilbert Bowden and Tony Binns. The information will only be accessible via a secure log-in or the locked cabinet as outlined above.

15(f) Do you intend to publish any personal information they have provided?

NO

15(g) Do you propose to collect demographic information to describe your sample? For example: gender, age, ethnicity, education level, etc.

Yes. Age is relevant to this study, but the information collected about gender will not allow the responses of individual participants to be identified

15 (h) Have you, or will you, undertake Māori consultation? Choose one of the options below, and delete the option that does not apply:

(Refer to <http://www.otago.ac.nz/research/maoriconsultation/index.html>).

NO. The research is being undertaken overseas.

16. Does the research or teaching project involve any form of deception?

NO

17. Disclose and discuss any potential problems or ethical considerations: (For example: medical or legal problems, issues with disclosure, conflict of interest, safety of the researcher, etc.)

It is not expected that any conflicts or issues will arise out of this research project. Participants will be provided with the researcher's contact details should they wish to discuss any issues raised in the process of participating in the research. Although there may be some sensitive issues raised by participants during discussion of the challenges facing them as marginalised or unemployed youth, the methods selected for this project are specifically designed to be non-confrontational and to avoid raising issues that can't be resolved.

The Civil War in Sri Lanka ended in 2009. Since then, multiple parliamentary and provincial elections, and a presidential election have occurred without any unrest or violence. The University of Otago has allowed several researchers from a variety of departments (Geography, Peace & Conflict Studies, Religious Studies) to conduct research in Sri Lanka, including Prof. Binns who has visited Sri Lanka since the cessation of violence in 2009, and is confident that it is a safe and stable place to visit and work. There is currently no travel advisory provided by www.safetravel.govt.nz for Sri Lanka, other than to say that New Zealanders travelling or living in Sri Lanka should have comprehensive medical and travel insurance policies in place. All researchers will comply with these recommendations. Dr. Gamini Ranasinghe's collaboration in the research process provides many benefits, including various contacts, local knowledge and risk mitigation.

While Sri Lanka is not identified as a 'high risk' in medical terms, all of the recommended vaccinations will be taken, and all food and water advice will be adhered to in order to mitigate this risk. All fieldwork will be carried out in and around the city of Jaffna, which has a number of high quality medical institutions, including Jaffna Teaching Hospital, and Point Pedro Base Hospital. Professor Tony Binns is confident that, given that the above precautions are in place, there is no undue medical risk in conducting fieldwork in Sri Lanka. This opinion is built on his 40 years of experience working in developing countries and his most recent visit to Jaffna in December 2013.

In terms of security, there are currently no travel restrictions in place for Sri Lanka. Petty crime is a potential issue in some areas of Jaffna. Researchers will seek the advice of local people, avoid unnecessary movement at night time and avoid overt displays of wealth that could identify them as targets. The SOS ratings identify no specific risks for travellers in Sri Lanka, but encourage modest dress and caution when selecting modes of transportation and accommodation locations. Gilbert Bowden will be in constant contact with local mentors from the University of Jaffna, as well as Prof. Tony Binns and Dr. Gamini Ranasinghe, and will have a mobile phone with him at all times. All researchers involved in the project will be staying in secure accommodation whilst in Sri Lanka.

The Department of Geography at the University of Otago requires the submission of a detailed Health and Safety Plan prior to departure for fieldwork. This provides the opportunity for in-depth planning and consideration of potential challenges.

18. *Applicant's Signature:

Name (please print):

Date:

*The signatory should be the staff member detailed at Question 1.

19. Departmental approval: *I have read this application and believe it to be valid research and ethically sound. I approve the research design. The Research proposed in this application is compatible with the University of Otago policies and I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee with my recommendation that it be approved.*

Signature of **Head of Department:

Name of HOD (please print):

Date:

**Where the Head of Department is also the Applicant, then an appropriate senior staff member must sign on behalf of the Department or School.

Attach copies of the Information Sheet for Participants, Consent Form, and Advertisement to your application

**Send the signed original plus 17 double-sided and stapled copies of the application to:
Academic Committees, Room G22, G23 or G24, Ground Floor, Clocktower Building,
University of Otago, Dunedin**

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE: Interview Topics

Local youth attempting to gain employment within Jaffna

- Demographic information
- Level of education
- Skills/previous training
- Residential information
- Individual income
- Local, recent arrival or former internally displaced person (IDP)
- Description of working experiences
- Services
- Credit and capital
- Experience of government
- Experience of NGOs
- Experience of other service providers
- Changes over time
- General employment and post-conflict development experiences

Government/NGO officials

- Policies in place re. youth employment
- Policies in place re. engaging marginalised youth
- Interaction with marginalised youth
- Services available and their uptake

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE: Focus group discussions

Focus group sessions will occur in Jaffna with participants sourced from the University of Jaffna, and NGO's working with marginalise youth. Each session will be comprised of about 10 participants. The focus group discussions will take place in a selected place either within the University of Jaffna Campus or an NGO's headquarters. Participants will be asked to engage in an approximately two-hour discussion session.

The following themes will be covered by the focus group discussion

1. Participants' level of education and training
2. Accessibility of education and training
3. Participants' thoughts on the role of the government and or NGOs in post-conflict employment for youth
4. Changes in ability to access employment since the civil war's conclusion, including whether things have got better or worse
5. Perceptions on how the Northern Province is recovering from the Civil War
6. Political awareness of young people within Jaffna
7. Community perceptions on employment as a social process
8. Future prospects of employment in the Northern Province

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE: Key informant interviews

Key Informants will be selected from within the University of Jaffna, local NGOs involved in youth employment, and government ministries undertaking post-conflict development in Jaffna. Their strength is that they provide a user perspective on the local youth employment situation and the particular circumstances which prevent or encourage this process. This will allow the researcher to gather information about the history and origin of youth unemployment and marginalisation in Sri Lanka, its changes over time, and the opportunities and constraints of its improvement in the future. The interview will be conducted by using a semi-structured format with open-ended questions. The following themes will be covered by the key informant interviews.

1. General perceptions and opinions on how the Northern Province is recovering from the Civil War
2. Historical background of youth marginalisation and unemployment in Jaffna
3. The initiatives currently being enacted concerning youth unemployment
4. The success of such initiatives
5. The influence of returning refugees and IDPs to the labour market
6. The competency of the government and/or NGOs in resolving youth unemployment problems
7. Political awareness of young people within Jaffna
8. Community perceptions on employment as a social process
9. Future prospects of employment in the Northern Province

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE: SOS ratings

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has received a “moderate risk” rating from globally renowned travel organisation SOS International. In addition, Sri Lanka has recently been ranked 73rd on the United Nations’ Human Development Index (HDI, 2014), mainly due to the Sri Lankan government undertaking an ambitious program of development projects since the Civil War’s end in 2009.

1. Security Advice

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- Normal travel can proceed.
- Travel to the Northern and Eastern provinces requires robust planning measures and personnel should ensure that they are confident in their transport, accommodation, and communications prior to travel. Travellers unfamiliar with operating in Sri Lanka are advised to enlist the support of a trusted local guide or security provider to accompany them for visits outside Sri Lanka.
- Ensure you are fully briefed prior to travel and receive regular updates prior to and during your journey; register with your embassy and all relevant warden networks.
- Take common sense precautions against crime, such as keeping all valuables out of sight and avoiding all travel on foot unaccompanied or outside daylight hours, or when unfamiliar with the local area. Do not offer resistance to an armed assailant, as this tends to increase the risk of violence being used.
- Tensions between Sinhalese Buddhists, Tamil Hindus and Tamil Muslims occasionally result in incidents of unrest. Protests over local economic and political issues are uncommon, but can be frequent during periods of political tension such as the elections. Petty crime poses the potential hazard for foreigners

2. Before you go

ROUTINE MEDICAL CARE

- Obtain routine medical and dental care before you leave. All routine vaccinations should be current (polio; varicella; measles, mumps and rubella; tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis). In addition, see a travel health practitioner 6 to 8 weeks before departure. Some vaccinations require a series of doses spaced weeks apart. Some malaria medications should be taken a week or more before arriving in the malarial country.
- Arrange a copy of your personal health record to carry with you when you travel.
- Pack an ample supply of prescription and routine medications *in their original packaging*. Place them in your carry-on luggage, with copies of your prescription. Consider carrying a doctor’s note explaining your need for legal, non-prescription drugs you have packed - in English and the language of your destination(s).

ROUTINE VACCINATIONS

- All routine vaccinations should be current: polio; varicella; measles, mumps and rubella and Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis.

3. While in Sri Lanka

FOOD AND WATER PRECAUTION

- Travellers have a small risk of developing diarrhoea in any country. It may be advisable to drink bottled water only, especially on short trips. Always wash your hands with soap before eating, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. See the following country-specific recommendations:

WATER AND BEVERAGES

- Tap water is unsafe. Drink only bottled or boiled water and carbonated drinks. Avoid ice, because it may have been made with unsafe water.

FOOD RISK

- Food served in large five-star hotels and well-known restaurants should be safe, but always choose food that has been thoroughly cooked while fresh and is served hot. Avoid street vendors, because the standard of hygiene may be low and food may not be fresh. Do not buy pre-peeled fruit or salad. Fruit that you wash and peel yourself should be safe. Avoid shellfish. Ensure that milk and other dairy products have been pasteurized.

10.2 - Appendix 2: Information and Consent form for participants



Youth Employment: The Key to Future Political and Economic Sustainability in a Post-conflict country? A Case Study in Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka.

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR
PARTICIPANTS**

(NB. This Information Sheet will also be translated into Tamil and Sinhalese on arrival in Sri Lanka)

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the Aim of the Project?

This Project is being undertaken as part of the requirements for a Masters of Geography at the University of Otago. The aim of this project is to critically analyse the link between youth employment, and the economic and political sustainability of the post-conflict nation of Sri Lanka.

What Type of Participants are being sought?

The participants being sought for this project are mainly citizens of Jaffna aged 18-30, who are attempting to gain meaningful employment, or are being marginalised within the post-conflict development process. Other participants may include officials from the national or provincial governments, as well as NGOs, community groups, religious groups and students from the University of Jaffna.

What will Participants be Asked to Do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to **either**:

- answer several questions about your experiences of attempting to gain employment during the post-conflict development setting, or about the strategies in place to increase youth employment. Questioning will occur in the form of an interview or survey

Or

- participate in a focus group to generate information around a particular theme of the youth employment situation in Jaffna, or the post-conflict development process.

The amount of time involved may vary, but key informant interviews may last up to one hour and focus groups may last up to two hours.

Participants will be invited to participate in only one part of the project (key informant interview, survey or focus group).”

Please be aware that you may decide not to take part in the project without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What Data or Information will be Collected and What Use will be Made of it?

Data about the link between youth employment, and the economic and political sustainability of the post-conflict nation of Sri Lanka will be collected during this project. If participants agree interviews them will be audio-taped to allow the researcher to listen to the interview again and interpret information accurately. The recordings will be destroyed at the completion of the project. A digital or physical copy will be taken of the diagrams produced during the community exercises.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. Data obtained as a result of the research will be retained for **at least 5 years** in secure storage. Any personal information held on the participants (such as contact details, audio or video tapes, after they have been transcribed etc,) may be destroyed at the completion of the research even though the data derived from the research will, in most cases, be kept for much longer or possibly indefinitely.

The results of the project may be published, and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand), but every attempt will be made to preserve your anonymity. The results of this study will be made available to you should you wish.

This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning will be about your experiences attempting to gain employment during the post-conflict development process, or about the strategies in place to increase youth employment. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

In the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable, you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s), and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

Can Participants Change their Mind and Withdraw from the Project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

What if Participants have any Questions?

If you have any questions about our project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:-

Gilbert Bowden

and

Professor Tony Binns

Department of Geography
University of Otago

Department of Geography
University of Otago

University Telephone Number:

+64 3 479 5356

Email Address:

bowgi180@student.otago.ac.nz

Email Address:

jab@geography.otago.ac.nz

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph +643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.

Youth Employment: The Key to Future Political and Economic Sustainability in a Post-conflict country? A Case Study in Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

(NB. This Consent Form will also be translated into Tamil and Sinhalese on arrival in Sri Lanka)

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:-

1. My participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. Personal identifying information may be destroyed at the conclusion of the project but any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for at least five years;
4. This project involves an open-questioning technique. The general line of questioning includes will be about your experiences in attempting to gain employment during the post-conflict development process, or about the strategies in place to increase youth employment. The precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. In the event that the line of questioning develops in such a way that I feel hesitant or uncomfortable, I may decline to answer any particular question(s), and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind. Consequently, although the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.
5. The results of the project may be published and will be available in the University of Otago Library (Dunedin, New Zealand). Unless my specific consent is given, every attempt will be made to preserve my anonymity should I choose to remain anonymous.

6. I, as the participant: a) agree to being named in the research, ☐ OR;
 b) would rather remain anonymous ☐

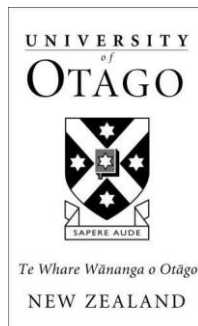
I agree to take part in this project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

.....
(Printed Name)

This study has been approved by the University of Otago Human Ethics Committee. If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Committee through the Human Ethics Committee Administrator (ph +643 479 8256 or email gary.witte@otago.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated and you will be informed of the outcome.



10.3 - Appendix 3: Ethics Acceptance



14/205

Academic Services
Manager, Academic Committees, Mr Gary Witte

1 December 2014

Professor T Binns
Department of Geography
Division of Humanities

Dear Professor Binns,

I am again writing to you concerning your proposal entitled "**Youth employment: The Key to Future Political and Economic Sustainability in a Post-conflict country? A Case Study in Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka**", Ethics Committee reference number 14/205.

Thank you for your email of 1 December 2014 which provided your letter of response to the Committee and your revised documentation. Thank you for clarifying that participants would only undertake one activity, being the interview or the survey or focus group.

Thank you for revising the Information Sheet revised to clarify that participants only undertake one of the activities; and for ensuring terms are used consistently throughout. Thank you also for amending Item 3 of Consent Form.

On the basis of this response, I am pleased to confirm that the proposal now has full ethical approval to proceed.

Approval is for up to three years from the date of this letter. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, re-approval must be requested. If the nature, consent, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise me in writing.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Gary Witte
Manager, Academic Committees
Tel: 479 8256
Email: gary.witte@otago.ac.nz

c.c. Professor S J Fitzsimons Head Department of Geography

10.4 - Appendix 4: Health and Safety Plan

Department of Geography

University of Otago

Health & Safety Plan

Sri Lanka (18 Feb – 9 Apr 2015)

Cover Sheet

Field Leader (name):

Professor J A (Tony) Binns

Field contact (if possible):

a. Sri Lanka:

Dr M A Shantha Wijesinghe, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Colombo
Phone No.: +94 (0) 7180-79802

b. Home/travelling contact:

(NZ) Professor Etienne Nel: +64-(0) 21-233-5688

(UK- Tony's son) Joseph Binns: +44-7765-965460

(NZ- Gilbert's father) Patrick Bowden: +64-027-4365-161

c. Trip contact:

Name:

Professor Etienne Nel

Phone:

: +64-(0) 21-233-5688

Destination(s):

Colombo, Sri Lanka, & Jaffna, Sri Lanka

Trip itinerary: (include all travel dates/times; transport providers):

1. Professor Tony Binns (travelling from UK)

Departing: Wednesday 18th Feb @ 20.10, Emirates (LGW/DXB/CMB)

Returning: Wednesday 4 March @ 18.25, Emirates (CMB/DXB/LGW)

2. Gilbert Bowden (travelling from NZ)

Departing: Wednesday 18th Feb @ 12:55, Air NZ & Emirates, (CHC/SYD/DXB/CMB)

Returning: Thursday 9th April @ 12:45, Air NZ & Emirates, (CMB/DXB/ACK)

Trip participants (names, student ID, next of kin (relationship, home town, phone numbers):

Name	Next of kin/relationship	Town/phone
1. Prof J A (Tony) Binns,	Joseph (son)	+44-7765-965460
2. Mr G Bowden, Student (ID:1230171),	Patrick Bowden (father)	+64-027-4365-161:

Feedback (to be completed by H&S Officer), upon receipt of Field Leader's post-trip report:

Please attach your health & safety plan. Your plan should anticipate all the risks and hazards associated with your fieldwork, including transport to and from the site, and identify how you plan to eliminate, isolate or minimise each risk or hazard. Refer to the University of Otago 'Guidelines to Field Activities' (Sept 2008) for guidance and discuss your plan with the Department's H&S Officer. Send a draft plan to Mr Howarth 14 days before the intended field trip in the case of new field work. In the case of ongoing fieldwork, that does not involve new participants or methods or locations, please provide only the cover sheet. Send an email to Mr Howarth, on your return from EVERY trip, noting any events that relate to the health and safety of the participants.

University of Otago
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

Professor J A (Tony) Binns

Master's Thesis Fieldwork in Sri Lanka – 18 February to 9 April 2015

HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

Title of Project

Youth Employment: The Key to Future Political and Economic Sustainability in a Post-conflict country? A Case Study in Jaffna, Northern Province, Sri Lanka.

Dates

Sri Lanka: 18 February to 9 April 2015

Local address and contact details:

Dr M. A. Shantha Wijesinghe, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Colombo:

Tel: +94 (0) 7180-79802

Potential hazards

Crime

In any country, rich or poor, there is a risk of petty crime, notably theft. Such risks to the researcher obviously require a certain degree of vigilance when conducting field research. Sri Lanka is now politically stable and has a thriving tourist industry.

Local Travel / Accident

Domestic travel always poses certain health and safety risks, no matter what country the researcher is visiting. This research will require transport in a variety of forms; air, bus and local taxis. Travel insurance has been arranged, and both Gilbert and I will maintain good awareness of potential hazards on the road.

Heavy rain may affect mobility, but we have been assured by Dr Wijesinghe that there are no particular hazards likely to affect the fieldwork.

Health

We have sought professional advice on this from both our GP's, and we are assured that there are no major health problems in Sri Lanka. Our vaccinations for travel to tropical areas are now up to date.

In Sri Lanka, we will take the appropriate malaria prophylaxis. We will avoid drinking tap water and will carry a first aid kit containing medication for upset stomach, headaches, etc. We will take precautions to avoid sunburn and dehydration.

Accident response

Possibly the best accident response action is to avoid being involved in any accident. Therefore, common sense and precautions, with a fair degree of vigilance are required from the researcher when in the field.

We will inform our local host, Dr Shantha Wijesinghe, of our whereabouts at all times and will maintain contact with him via mobile phone. We will both ensure that we are fully covered by accident and medical insurance for the duration of our time overseas.

Professor Tony Binns and Gilbert Bowden

22 December 2014

10.5 - Appendix 5: Tables of Key Informants, Focus Groups & Questionnaires

Table of Key Informants		
Number	Name	Position
1	N/A	Former Vice Chancellor of the University of Jaffna (UJ)
2	N/A	UJ Head of Geography Department
3	N/A	UJ Lecturer, Geography Department
4	N/A	UJ Lecturer, Geography Department
5	N/A	UJ Lecturer, Sociology Department
6	N/A	UJ Lecturer, Geography Department
7	N/A	SEWA LANKA, Youth Development Co-ordinator
8	N/A	British Council Jaffna, Branch Manager
9	N/A	Centre for Poverty Analysis (Colombo), Senior Contributor
10	N/A	VisionFund Lanka, Branch Manager
11	N/A	Local Taxi Driver
12	N/A	Management Development Training Unit, Director
13	N/A	National Apprentice & Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), Director
14	N/A	35, expat, Satellite Engineer, Singapore
15	N/A	Red Cross International, Branch Manager
16	N/A	Council of NGO's, Jaffna
17	N/A	Point Pedro Institute of Development
18	N/A	Alliance Française, Branch Manager
19	N/A	World Vision, Jaffna Office, Manager
20	N/A	STEPS, Course Co-ordinator
21	N/A	Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Professor in Agriculture Department
22	N/A	Centre for Child Development, District Director
23	N/A	Centre for Child Development, Administrator
24	N/A	Sarvodaya, District Co-ordinator of Jaffna
25	N/A	Assistant Director, Nallur Division, Jaffna
26	N/A	Skills Development Officer, Nallur Division
27	N/A	Human Resources Officer, Nallur Division
28	N/A	Director, University College, Jaffna
29	N/A	Admin Officer, University College, Jaffna
30	N/A	Jaffna Social Action Centre (JSAC)
31	N/A	Administrator, British Council, Jaffna
32	N/A	University of Jaffna, Student Geography Society President
33	N/A	PARCIC, Jaffna
34	N/A	National Youth Services Council, Assistant Director
35	N/A	Centre for Policy Alternative
36	N/A	Advanced Technology Institute
37	N/A	UJ Lecturer, Sociology Department
38	N/A	Unemployed Graduate Union Member, Jaffna
39	N/A	Swiss Development Co-operation, Jaffna
40	N/A	UNDP, Jaffna
41	N/A	Jaffna District Secretariat, Director of Planning
42	N/A	Social Organisational Networks for Development (SOND), Branch Manager

Table of Focus Groups		
Number	Name (delete when put into thesis)	Position (Male = M), (Female = F)
1	Youth 1 – 12 (FOCUS GROUP)	Youth – Vatharawattai (Jaffna District)
2	Junior Lecturer 1 – 5 (FOCUS GROUP)	University of Jaffna, Junior Lecturers: 25-27years
3	Lecturer 1 – 5 (FOCUS GROUP)	College of Technology Jaffna, Lecturers

Table of Questionnaires		
Number	Name (delete when put into thesis)	Position (Male = M), (Female = F)
1 – 32	Student 1 – 32 (SURVEYS)	College of Technology Campus, Jaffna
33 – 70	Student 1 – 38 (SURVEYS)	University of Jaffna Campus, Jaffna
71 – 100	Local Jaffna Youth 1-30 (SURVEYS)	Stanley Rd, Hospital Rd & Beach Rd, Jaffna

10.6 - Appendix 6: Key themes for interview questions

Research Topics

Local youth attempting to gain employment within Jaffna

- Demographic information
- Level of education
- Skills/previous training
- Residential information
- Individual income
- Local, recent arrival or former internally displaced person (IDP)
- Description of working experiences
- Services
- Credit and capital
- Experience of government
- Experience of NGOs
- Experience of other service providers
- Changes over time
- General employment and post-conflict development experiences

Government/NGO officials

- Policies in place re. youth employment
- Policies in place re. engaging marginalised youth
- Interaction with marginalised youth
- Services available and their uptake

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group sessions occurred in Jaffna with participants sourced from the University of Jaffna, and NGO's working with marginalise youth. Each session comprised about 10 participants. The focus group discussions took place in a selected place either within the University of Jaffna Campus or an NGO's headquarters. Participants were asked to engage in an approximately two-hour discussion session.

The following themes were covered by the focus group discussion:

- Participants' level of education and training
- Accessibility of education and training
- Participants' thoughts on the role of the government and or NGOs in post-conflict employment for youth
- Changes in ability to access employment since the civil war's conclusion, including whether things have got better or worse
- Perceptions on how the Northern Province is recovering from the Civil War
- Political awareness of young people within Jaffna
- Community perceptions on employment as a social process
- Future prospects of employment in the Northern Province

Key Informant Interviews

Key Informants were selected from within the University of Jaffna, local NGOs involved in youth employment, and government ministries undertaking post-conflict development in Jaffna. Their strength was that they provided a user perspective on the local youth employment situation and the particular circumstances which prevent or encourage this process. This allowed the researcher to gather information about the history and origin of youth unemployment and marginalisation in Sri Lanka, its changes over time, and the opportunities and constraints of its improvement in the future. The interviews were conducted by using a semi-structured format with open-ended questions. The following themes were covered by the key informant interviews.

- General perceptions and opinions on how the Northern Province is recovering from the Civil War
- Historical background of youth marginalisation and unemployment in Jaffna
- The initiatives currently being enacted concerning youth unemployment
- The success of such initiatives
- The influence of returning refugees and IDPs to the labour market
- The competency of the government and/or NGOs in resolving youth unemployment problems
- Political awareness of young people within Jaffna
- Community perceptions on employment as a social process
- Future prospects of employment in the Northern Province